

# SARBAT DA BHALLA

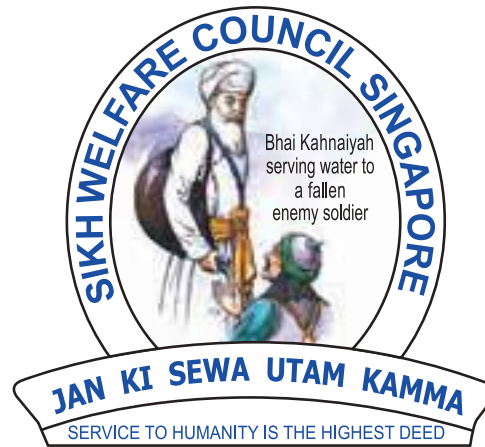
SERVICE TO HUMANITY



SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL

*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*  
(1995-2020)





# SARBAT DA BHALLA

## SERVICE TO HUMANITY

This publication was launched at the

**SIWEC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Appreciation Day**

on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021 by

**Mdm Halimah Yacob**  
**President of the Republic of Singapore**

# EDITORIAL TEAM

## Chairman

Gurdip Singh Usma

## Vice-Chairman

Manmohan Singh

## Members

Albel Singh

Sharanjit Kaur

Sarabjeet Singh

Harmit Singh Kawatra

Sarafeen Kaur Twinky

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SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL

2 Towner Road, Singapore 327804

Tel: + 65 6299 9234

Fax: + 65 6294 1582

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

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App Content & Concepts Pte Ltd

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## Editorial Note

While every effort has been made to give an accurate account of the events, donors, institutions, people, and provide other relevant information in documenting the Council's 25-year history in this book, we sincerely apologise for any omissions or errors, or where certain events, people, institutions' or donors' contributions have been inadvertently omitted or inaccurately documented. There were limited records available for the first 10 years of SIWEC's history.



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**Bhai Kahnaiyah serving water  
to a fallen enemy soldier**

# Sikh Welfare Council

*A Registered Charity*

*An Institution of Public Character (IPC)*

*A Member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS)*

## Logo

In the search for a compelling logo and motto, inspiration was drawn from the history of the Sikh faith. The iconic image of Bhai Kahnaiyah was chosen, with his exemplary spirit of selfless service to all humanity as motivation for SIWEC's volunteers to embrace, embody and express values of humanity in their approach to Sewa.

## Motto — Jan Ki Sewa Utam Kamma

The motto “Jan Ki Sewa Utam Kamma” (Service to Humanity is the Highest Deed) from the Gurbani (Sikh scriptures) exhorts SIWEC to aspire towards being inclusive by serving all who need help, beyond its mandate to focus its outreach to members of the Sikh community.

## Creed — Sarbat da Bhalla

Our creed “Sarbat da Bhalla” (*Well-Being of all Humanity*) invokes the Sikh in his twice-daily prayer (Ardas), to pray and ask the Almighty (Waheguru Ji) to safeguard the well-being of all of humanity, grant prosperity for everyone in the worldwide community, and bless all the inhabitants of our planet with peace.

# Message

## **Mdm Halimah Yacob**

*President of the Republic of Singapore*

*Guest of Honour*

*SIWEC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Appreciation Day*

Congratulations to the Sikh community and the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) on reaching the significant milestone of 25 years of community service. SIWEC has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1995 as a self-help organisation that focused on helping Sikh individuals and families.

This book highlights the Sewa (*Selfless Service*) of the volunteers as well as the philanthropic contributions of successful businessmen and professionals who worked with pioneer generation leaders to serve the community. It captures the spirit of Sarbat da Bhalla (*Well-Being of all Humanity*), which rallied a pool of dedicated volunteers to help establish, manage, fund-raise and sustain the growth of SIWEC.

I am heartened by the community's inclusive efforts to reach out beyond your own community and assist people of other races and faiths. The effort by the community of volunteers and donors has played an important role in ensuring the success of a modest self-help endeavour conceived more than 25 years ago.

I look forward to SIWEC's continued contributions to the national effort in helping the disadvantaged and building a more caring and inclusive society in the decades ahead.

Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!



# Foreword

## Mr Inderjit Singh

*Chairman, Coordinating Council of Sikh Institutions (CCSI), and  
Former Member of Parliament*

It gives me great pleasure to pen this message in celebration of the Sikh Welfare Council's (SIWEC) 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This is an important milestone not just for SIWEC but also for the entire Sikh community of Singapore.

The Sikh community in Singapore created the different institutions upon their first arrival in Singapore some 100 years ago. The first to be set up were the Gurdwaras to cater to the religious and community gathering needs of the early Sikhs. Among others, the Singapore Khalsa Association and the Sikh Missionary Society of Malaya were the pioneer Sikh institutions here. Over the years, Sikh community leaders identified two significant gaps and went on to set up two important institutions to cater to the growing needs of the community. The first was the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF) set up 30 years ago and the second was SIWEC, 25 years ago. Kudos to our community leaders for having such great foresight as both these organisations have made significant contributions to not just the Sikh community but also to Singapore.

SIWEC core mission is to cater to the well-being and welfare of the community and also to other Singaporeans who may need help. This covers a wide area and over the years as needs changed, SIWEC has constantly evolved to ensure the emerging needs of the community are well addressed. SIWEC over the years has organised many landmark events, like the "Sarbat da Bhalla Round Singapore Runs" that involved all other religious and community organizations to bring harmony and build cohesion among Singaporeans. Today, SIWEC offers a very comprehensive list of services, quite like what the Family Service Centres (FSC) in our housing estates offer. SIWEC continues to review the community needs to ensure their support remains relevant and effective.

I want to congratulate and thank the current and all past management committees of SIWEC for their dedication and significant contributions to the community. It is indeed a milestone that deserves celebration as 25 years of history and continuous contribution to the community is a significant achievement.

Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary SIWEC and congratulations to the entire Sikh community.



# Preface

**Mr Gurdip Singh Usma**

*Chairman, Sikh Welfare Council  
2015–2021*

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

The Sikh Welfare Council was set up in 1995 as a community-wide response to assist vulnerable Sikh families and individuals to better cope with a fast-changing socio-economic context which presented financial, educational, employment and social challenges. The first 25 years in any institution's development is a significant milestone that presents the opportunity to document its challenging journey of growth from modest beginnings in 1995 to a well-regarded social service organisation with IPC status presently.

## Creed of Sarbat da Bhalla

“Serving the Community” and “Sharing with Others” are basic tenets of the Sikh religion and “Sarbat da Bhalla” (*Well-Being of all Humanity*) is the creed of the Sikh community, which is invoked by Sikhs the world over, in all prayers (Ardas) conducted by them daily. It was this fundamental commitment to serve humanity that laid the foundation of the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC). As discussed in the history section of this book, the Sikh Advisory Board recognised the growing needs of the less privileged within the community in the early 1990s and with the support of all the Sikh Institutions in Singapore, set up the Sikh Welfare Council 25 years ago in 1995. The support of the whole community was very evident for this noble cause with funding commitments of over \$1.7 million at the launch event itself.

## Humble Beginnings

The challenges faced by SIWEC during its initial years were that there were no fixed models to emulate. We studied how other self-help groups in Singapore provided for the needy within their community and picked what suited us best.

With limited resources, we embarked on our journey with only one full-time staff to provide for a spectrum of services. He was assisted by volunteers whose contribution has been remarkable. Over the years, as the needs grew and more financial resources became available, we strengthened our staffing and expanded our services. Currently, we have six full-time staff and two part-time staff.

In the early years, SIWEC focused on providing for beneficiaries within the Sikh community. The key areas of focus were financial support for needy families, bereavement support for all Sikhs and prison counselling for Sikh inmates. As the socio-economic demographics of the Sikhs in Singapore changed, so did the services evolve over time to meet the emerging needs.

## IPC Status and NCSS Membership

2009 was a consequential year when the Government granted the Institution of Public Character (IPC) status to SIWEC, with two immediate implications. First, our scope of services was expanded beyond serving only Sikhs to now encompass the wider Singapore community as well. Second, the IPC status boosted our fund raising efforts as all donations to SIWEC began to enjoy generous income tax deductions. SIWEC's status was further bolstered in 2014, when we became a full member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) with more opportunities and funding resources being available to help our beneficiaries.

While having an IPC status has had a very positive impact on SIWEC, the one limitation it has placed on SIWEC is that our focus has primarily shifted to helping beneficiaries in Singapore only. In line with the IPC regulations, our ability to provide humanitarian support to overseas victims of natural disasters or other tragedies has been curtailed.

Overall, with the support of the whole community, we believe that over the past 25 years, SIWEC has made a positive impact on the lives of the beneficiaries served in the wider Singapore community. SIWEC is now duly recognised by the community and government agencies as a well-regarded welfare organisation.

### Critical Success Factors

No welfare organisation can grow on its own. It can only succeed, first by attaining credibility and recognition within the community and then with the moral, physical, and financial support from the wider community for its programmes and services.

The key factors that have contributed significantly to the success that SIWEC has achieved over the past 25 years include:

- Steadfast community support from individuals, institutions, and corporate donors.
- Dedicated volunteers devoting effort with hearts, hands, and minds to conceive, plan, implement programmes and help to raise funds. They ensured continued delivery of ongoing programmes and services to benefit our clients, as well as devising new ones in response to demographic changes and gaps in service.
- Forging strong partnerships across the social, health and home-front sectors with key

agencies like the Singapore Indian Development Association, National Council of Social Service, Health Promotion Board, Agency for Integrated Care, Singapore Prisons Service, amongst others.

One key reality confronting social service organisations like ours is in building on what we have achieved and to plan for the next lap of our development. Our guiding principles and focus areas include:

- Keeping in mind that community support is fundamental,
- SIWEC must remain relevant in the ever changing social, political, and economic environment around us,
- Increasing complexity of challenges facing beneficiaries we support, especially with the intersection of issues in a post-Covid context,
- People not seeking help due to stigma and concerns about confidentiality,
- Publicity, communications and outreach through new channels will be vital as will innovative physical and virtual fund-raising platforms,
- Succession planning, professionalisation and skill sets of the Management Committee and staff team going forward.

### Editorial Shortcomings

In documenting the 25-year history of SIWEC in this modest book, we sincerely apologise for any omissions or errors in interpretation, especially where any institutions', donors' or volunteers' contributions have been inadvertently omitted or inaccurately reflected. Our editorial team volunteers have worked painstakingly over more



than a year to interview pioneer staff, volunteers and leadership, besides searching the national archives and combing through all existing past records. Unfortunately, we had limited records of the first 10 years of our history.

### Our Gratitude

We would like to place on record our thanks to former Members of Parliament Davinder Singh, Dr Kanwaljit Soin and Inderjit Singh for all the support and guidance they have provided to SIWEC since its inception, especially in dealings with government agencies and community partners. We also thank Mr Inderjit Singh for his foreword in this publication.

We are also grateful to our Guest of Honour, Mdm Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore for gracing our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Appreciation Day as well as providing the message in this publication.

In conclusion, we would like to thank all Sikh institutions' leadership for the steadfast support since our inception, as well as all our individual donors, volunteers, management committee members, past and present staff, social service and health sector partners, government agencies, and all who have helped SIWEC over the past 25 years to achieve our objectives.

We look forward to your continued support and involvement in our journey of the next 25 years and beyond, as SIWEC charts its future in the spirit of Chardi Kala and Sarbat da Bhalla.

Jan Ki Sewa Utam Kamma,

Gurdip Singh Usma





OUR FIRST 25 YEARS  
(1995–2020)

# Key Milestones



- **Launch of Sikh Welfare Council** on 14 October 1995.
- **Established 24-hour Hotline** 6299 9234.
- **Office setup** on level 3 at Central Sikh Temple (CST).

1995

1999

- **The first Round the Island Overnight Marathon** held in conjunction with the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa.



- **First cycling fund-raising event** from Ipoh to Singapore organised by Mr Manjit Singh Sevea raising \$60,000.

2001

2004

- **First SIWEC Flag Day** in collaboration with Singapore Sikh Education Foundation.





- **Second cycling fund-raising ride** from Malacca to Singapore was organised by Mr Manjit Singh Sevea, raising \$23,000.



- SIWEC became an **associate member of NCSS**.
- SIWEC **moved to its interim office at Singapore Khalsa Association (SKA)** while Central Sikh Temple (CST) was being renovated.

2005

2008

2009

2010

- **Free clinic began operations** on 24 December 2005, led by Dr Amar Kaur and a group of volunteer health professionals, at Sikh Centre Silat Road.

- **Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon succeeds Dr Sorinder Singh as SIWEC Chairman.**
- **SIWEC obtained IPC status** in November 2009, after completion of constitutional review.







- **President S R Nathan hosted Sikh community donors** at the Istana to present autographed copies of his book, raising \$170,000.
- **Inaugural SIWEC Appreciation Day** held at SKA, with MP Inderjit Singh as Guest of Honour.



- **SIWEC became a full member of NCSS.**
- **Sunehri Sahelian (Active Ageing) programme inaugurated** at CST, in collaboration with the Council for 3<sup>rd</sup> Age (C3A).
- The **Academic Excellence Programme (AEP)** was launched in collaboration with SSEF.
- **Revival of the charity cycling rides** by Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa with Ride for Charity 2014 raising \$210,000.

**2011**

**2012**

**2013**

**2014**

**2015**

- In August, **SIWEC moved into a larger office at 6<sup>th</sup> level of CST**, after renovations were completed.



- **First SIWEC Retreat and Strategic Planning Seminar** was organised by then SIWEC Chairman, Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan in November with 40 invited guests.



- **2<sup>nd</sup> SIWEC Strategic Planning Retreat** was held in June with the new Management Committee led by Chairman Gurdip Singh Usma.







- **SIWEC qualified for the \$1,491,000 Care and Share Grant.**
- **Second Ride for Charity** was held in March raising \$200,000 for SIWEC and \$50,000 for the Sunlove Abode.



- **SIWEC initiated a complimentary Obituary Communication Service** using SMS system.
- **Third Ride for Charity (RfC)** was organised raising a total of \$96,000 for SIWEC and \$41,000 for Sunlove Abode.



- **Ride to Serve (RtS)** was established to organise annual charity cycling events in aid of SIWEC as the sole beneficiary, raising a total of \$282,000.
- **Third SIWEC Appreciation Day** was held with SPS Amrin Amin as Guest of Honour.

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

- **Community Mediation programme** was launched to help resolve family-disputes.
- **Second SIWEC Appreciation Day** with SMS PMO Heng Chee How as Guest of Honour.



- **Covid-19** circuit breaker (CB) measures were declared nationwide. The SIWEC operations team adjusted their work and support arrangements:
  - Work from home.
  - All activities for seniors, outings, and visits ceased.
  - Virtual management committee meetings continued via Zoom.
  - Video meetups and online support of clients resumed in June.
  - SIWEC facilitated live-streaming service for funerals from May.
  - Ride 2 Serve 2020 was deferred from a physical ride in March to a hybrid ride between October and December raising \$250,000, excluding \$100,000 Tote Board grant.



# The Past as Prologue

## – Early Sikh Community

### Sarbat da Bhalla in Action

#### Social Support in the Sikh Community (1950–1970)

##### Sarbat da Bhalla in Practice

The spirit of Sarbat da Bhalla (*Well-Being of all Humanity*) and philanthropy among the Sikh community in Singapore has been evident among Singapore Sikhs since the pre- and post-Independence periods.

Three significant welfare and social assistance initiatives preceded the formal inception of the Sikh Welfare Council three decades later:

- Up to the late 1960s, the social support network consisted of Gurdwara-based provision of housing for the destitute at the Central Sikh Temple, formerly in Queen Street.
- In 1964, the Sikh community donated an ambulance to the Singapore General Hospital.
- In conjunction with the 300<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of Guru Gobind Singh held on 14 January 1967 at the Singapore Conference Hall, the Sikh community handed over the keys to the second Guru Nanak ambulance to Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. The ambulance, valued at \$15,000, was used at the Thomson Road General Hospital.



**Donation of 1<sup>st</sup> ambulance to Singapore General Hospital by the Sikh Community in 1964**



*Minister for Health Yong Nyuk Lin with Sikh community leaders during the handover of a new ambulance, donated by the Sikh community in Singapore, at the Emergency/Admission Unit of the Singapore General Hospital on 8 August 1964.*

*(From left: Mr Amir Singh; Mr Sant Sohan Singh and Mr Sardul Singh Narula)*



## Donation of 2<sup>nd</sup> ambulance to Thomson Road General Hospital by the Sikh Community in 1967



*Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew with the Sikh community leaders (Mr Nirmal Tej Singh Chopra and Mr Sardul Singh Narula) on 14 January 1967. Photo: Singapore National Archives.*

Prime Minister  
and Mrs Lee Kuan  
Yew with Sikh  
community leaders.



## Lee praises the Sikhs

SINGAPORE's Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, last night congratulated the Sikh community for their "valuable" contribution to the success of society in the Republic.

Speaking at the celebrations to mark the 300th birthday of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj at the Conference Hall, he said: "To me, the Sikh community is one of the stirring sagas of human history. It is a small but a vigorous community."

He urged them to hold

SINGAPORE Sun.

on to their values which their faith and culture provided.

"We should not throw away virtues and doctrines which hold groups together," he said.

In matters concerning culture and values, it was best to make haste slowly. But, "however slowly, you and I who have become co-owners of this country, must find the largest common denominators."

The common milieu which

the people live in should give them sufficiency and of being and feeling together.

If the people did not have this feeling 'then you'll be sad,' but 'if you do, you'll be thinking of how to make our future more secure and not go to waste.'

The Prime Minister then received the keys to the second Guru Nanak ambulance donated by the community.

The ambulance, costing about \$15,000, is to be used at the Thomson Road General Hospital. The first is being used at the General Hospital.

# Beginnings

## Early Years

In 1978, 20 Sikh volunteers received training organised by the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA). They began religious counselling and weekly visits to Sikh inmates.

After the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF) was set up in 1990 to organise Punjabi language education as a second language, its contact with various Sikh families affirmed that many families faced various social issues and required help. This gave added impetus to conceive of a more systematic way to provide welfare support to Sikh families in need.

Two years after the government set up the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) in 1991, the Sikh Advisory Board led by Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada initiated a study into the plight of several Sikh destitute families, and the growing difficulties faced by Sikh children, youth and adults arising from the erosion of the family as a social unit.

In 1995 a proposal for a workable community-based welfare model to address prevailing gaps and core concerns facing the community was presented to Sikh community leaders, who were convinced of the urgent need to set up a dedicated welfare arm.

## Pressing Social Challenges in the 1990s

Before 1995, the welfare needs of the Sikh community were mostly addressed by the Gurdwaras, doing the best they could, within the limitations of their respective institutional resources. Information on families or individuals in need was received mainly through word of mouth to well-meaning volunteers from each Gurdwara. There was no coordinated or deliberate process to deal with such cases yet.

Some areas of welfare support included the provision of housing for the destitute since before the 1970s at the former Queen Street Sikh temple and Punjabi classes organised for Sikh children until 1990, when the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF) was set up.

Also in place by the 1990s were programmed visits to the prisons and drug rehabilitation centres (DRCs) by a group of 20 Sikh volunteers registered with the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) Sikh Counselling Service. They had received training with SANA in 1978 and had conducted religious counselling and visits to prisons ever since. The first Chairman of SANA Sikhs was Mr Surjan Singh, an educator who led the group between 1978 and 1980 when he handed over to Mr Mejar Singh, an army officer.

By the early 1990s, concerns had begun to surface among community leaders on the need for a more cohesive approach to address the welfare needs of vulnerable Sikh families and disadvantaged individuals. There was a growing concern that lack of



central coordination had resulted in wasteful overlap and duplication of effort.

Anecdotally, there was growing evidence of more Sikhs needing social, financial, emotional and moral support. Yet, there appeared an apparent reluctance to access help from the Gurdwaras. Also, more Sikhs had begun to turn to other faith-based community welfare organisations for solace in troubled times.

It was an ironic situation for the Sikh community, whose institutions had sufficient funds and resources to help. Yet, those in need of assistance appeared to be unaware, unable, or unwilling to access help at one of the Gurdwaras.

That was a moment for grave reckoning by the community leadership that Sikh families and individuals facing social, economic and mental health challenges tended to turn away from the perennial community touch-point — the Gurdwara — either because of privacy concerns and the fear of social stigma, or quite possibly a combination of both factors.

Community Response

It was out of the collective deliberations of two groups of Sikh individuals in the early 1990s that practical solutions were considered, to structure a workable community-based welfare agency for Sikhs in Singapore.

The first group, the Singapore Sikh Resource Panel (SSRP) inaugurated in 1990, was a loosely structured group of professionals comprising doctors, lawyers,

academics, and businessmen. The group focused on ways to uplift Sikh youth, and the Sikh community in general.

Singapore Sikhs Resource Panel Members
Dr Sorinder Singh
Dr Amar Kaur
Mr Balbeer Singh Mangat
Mr Darshan Singh Purain
Mr Harmit Singh Gandhi
Mr Kaka Singh
Dr Kanwaljit Soin
Associate Professor Kirpal Singh
Mr Surjan Singh

The second group was the Sikh Advisory Board (SAB), which included representatives from the Sikh Gurdwaras in Singapore. Having steered the successful setting up of the SSEF since 1990, the SAB used its strengths and lessons drawn from the education model to be adapted to dealing with the welfare challenges facing the community as well.

The establishment of SINDA in 1991 with strong government support had provided further impetus for Sikh community leaders to actively consider setting up a welfare agency for the Sikh community. Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada, as the Sikh representative on the Indian Task Force studying the problems facing Indians in Singapore, was a member of the team that set up SINDA. As a member of the SINDA Action Committee on Indian Education, he had been involved in the structuring of the Family Service Centre (FSC) at SINDA.

The momentum gradually built up between 1991 and 1994, when members of the SAB volunteering with SSEF as liaison officers experienced first-hand the complex socio-economic realities confronting vulnerable Sikh families. At each of the Punjabi language centres, a growing number of families were unable to pay their children's school fees or afford to buy books for their lessons.

By 1993, the Chairman of SAB, Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada, initiated work with the Sikh institutions to diagnose the welfare concerns of the community. The key concerns centred around the plight of several Sikh destitute families as well as the difficulties faced by Sikh children, youth and adults arising from the erosion of the family as a social unit.

The absence of a professionally constituted, viable and effective mechanism to process, study and address the welfare needs of individuals and groups in the community they were so stark that they required urgent attention.

In the quest to learn from the experiences of other similar agencies, Mr Bhajan and Mr Surjit Singh Wasan, then Secretary, SAB, attended numerous meetings with government agencies and established welfare organisations. This helped the SAB leadership get insights from seasoned practitioners into the good work already being done, prevailing gaps, as well as the cost implications and governance issues impacting established volunteer-led welfare agencies.

In early 1995, the SAB invited all heads of Sikh institutions to review the core concerns facing the community and proposed a workable community-based welfare model for addressing these gaps. Having been apprised periodically of the erosion of Sikh values among the youth and the more taxing socio-economic challenges facing our families, the

community leaders were convinced of the need for concrete action.

Mr Bhajan reassured community leaders that *"sensitivities of Sikh institutions, families and individuals must be borne in mind in carrying out various programmes and activities. In addition, the element of confidentiality would be given high priority in the conduct of counselling and welfare programmes. Finally, the provision of welfare assistance to individuals and families should be institutionalised and never personalised."*



*Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada  
Chairman, Sikh Advisory  
Board (1989–1996; 1999–2006)*

*SIWEC Vice-Chairman  
1995–2009*

There was consensus that the new entity should not duplicate what national agencies in Singapore were already providing. The aim was to ensure that Sikh community beneficiaries be guided to tap on all existing government-funded welfare schemes as a first step. SIWEC would act primarily as an information, referral and advice touchpoint, and as the avenue of last resort. In situations where limitations in the social support system left out certain individuals or gave inadequate aid, SIWEC would help with added support, based on the merits of each case.

Having secured the community leaders' blessings at that meeting, the SAB had then tasked Mr Amarjit Singh Khaira, a lawyer with the Attorney General's Chambers, to draft a proposed constitution for the community-based welfare agency.

Meanwhile, a community-wide donation drive was launched to raise sufficient funds for the new organisation. It was decided to invite a Minister to officiate as Guest of Honour for the Sikh community

dinner celebrating Singapore's 30 years as an independent nation, where SIWEC's formal launch was to be formally initiated in mid-October 1995.

The Sikh community, led by then Chairman of the Sikh Advisory Board Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada, felt that it was a moment of great collective pride for the entire Sikh community to embark on a historic venture. The objectives of the Punjabi/Sikh Welfare Council were articulated as:

*... to provide social, emotional, spiritual, financial support to Sikh families and individuals with the ultimate aim of enabling them to become self-reliant and self-supporting.*

A major success factor in setting-up the Sikh Welfare Council was the unwavering commitment of Sikh institutions and prominent philanthropists, professionals and business leaders and numerous well-wishers who overwhelmingly supported the idea of setting up a community-based welfare organisation to help the disadvantaged in the community.

Member of Parliament Davinder Singh said the welfare council deserved the community's support, noting how it would "restore dignity to those who, for various reasons, have not been so fortunate, and to teach them to become responsible members of society".



*Mr Davinder Singh  
Former Member of Parliament*

## Launch of SIWEC – 14 October 1995

The Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) was formally launched on 14 October 1995 at a Sikh community dinner to commemorate Singapore's 30<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary. The event was attended by about 1500 supporters and well-wishers gathered at the open field at the Serangoon/Boon Keng Road junction, diagonally across the Central Sikh Gurdwara at Towner Road.

### Guest of Honour

Officiating as Guest of Honour at SIWEC's formal launch, then Acting Minister for the Environment and Senior Minister of State for Defence, Mr Teo Chee Hean, remarked that the launch of SIWEC marked another significant endeavour in the community's spirit of continual self-help, building on its remarkable achievement in 1990 when it had established the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF).

In wishing the Sikh community success, he urged SIWEC to work within the context of the larger Indian community in Singapore, and the nation as a whole. He recognised that SIWEC had the potential to be a valued addition to the pool of available national resources to collectively address the welfare needs of the community by fostering close links with the former Ministry for Community Development, Youth and Sport, related national agencies, and working with the Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA) which had been established in 1991.



## Speech by RADM (NS) Mr Teo Chee Hean

*I wish to congratulate the Sikh community of Singapore and the leadership of the Sikh Advisory Board for organising this occasion to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Singapore.*

*We are a young nation with a short history. We are a people with diverse ethnic roots, cultures and religions. We have come together to form a nation, to share a common vision for a brighter future, and to work together to build that future for ourselves and our children.*

*As a young nation, ceremonies to mark our nationhood have a special significance. They are a valuable reminder of the sacrifices of our forefathers and of the contributions they have made to our country. Occasions like these also enable us to take careful stock of our achievements as a modern, progressive and democratic nation. They heighten the awareness among the younger generation of Singaporeans of the critical importance of cherishing, preserving and building upon what has been achieved by our predecessors.*

*Finally, events of this nature provide invaluable opportunities for the various communities to come together to reinforce the process of nation building, in our young multi-racial Republic.*

*The organisation of this event today is a testimony to the dynamism and cohesion of the Sikh community. Though small in number, you are a highly visible and vibrant community whose achievements and contributions are in many ways out of proportion to your numbers.*

*I wish to compliment the community for another salient characteristic which it has evolved over the years. This is the desire of the community to be actively involved in mainstream national events and sharing with the*

*nation and other communities, the Sikh way of life in general and the various developments in the Sikh community in particular.*

*For example, in November 1991, the entire community congratulated and collectively welcomed the new Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong and honoured him with a sword and a turban (symbols of power and leadership) and shared the Sikh way of life with him.*

*The second part of the programme today, as you all know, is to launch the Punjabi/Sikh Welfare Council. I am told that the launching of the Council is part of the continual self-help effort on the part of the Sikh community to uplift itself and address welfare concerns facing the community.*

*I am told that self-help is part of the teaching of the Sikh faith and has become a Sikh way of life. In December 1990, as part of the self-help movement, the Sikh community set up the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation to promote and finance the study of the Punjabi language in the Republic.*

*This commendable effort has resulted in the setting up of a National Punjabi Language Programme where 1,700 children are studying Punjabi language as an extension of their normal school curriculum. The whole community must be highly commended for this remarkable achievement.*

*Given your community's ability to organise itself and to rise to the occasion, I am sure the launching of the Punjabi/Sikh Welfare Council will be an important milestone in your community's self-help efforts.*



Guest of Honour, RADM (NS) Teo Chee Hean  
Acting Minister for the Environment, Senior  
Minister of State for Defence, and Chairman,  
PAP Community Foundation Executive  
Committee.



*In pursuing its goals, the Sikh community should continue to work within the context of the larger Indian community in Singapore, and the Singapore community as a whole. In this way, the Sikh community can retain its own unique identity while participating fully in sharing and contributing to — a culturally richer and more vibrant nation.*

*By linking up with the Ministry of Community Development, SINDA and other national agencies, the Punjabi/Sikh Welfare Council will enable the Sikh community to add to available national resources to meet the welfare needs of the community.*

*Finally, I wish to thank you for inviting me to join you in celebrating our country's 30<sup>th</sup> year of Independence, and I extend my best wishes to the Sikh community for the success of the Welfare Council and all its future endeavours.*

*“Given your community’s ability to organise itself and to rise to the occasion, I am sure the launching of the Punjabi/Sikh Welfare Council will be an important milestone in your community’s self-help efforts.*

*In pursuing its goals, the Sikh community should continue to work within the context of the larger Indian community in Singapore, and the Singapore community as a whole. In this way, the Sikh community can retain its own unique identity while participating fully in sharing and contributing to — a culturally richer and more vibrant nation.*

*By linking up with the Ministry of Community Development, SINDA and other national agencies, the Punjabi/Sikh Welfare Council will enable the Sikh Community to add to available national resources to meet the welfare needs of the community.”*



Girls from Singapore Khalsa Association, a Sikh sports and cultural group, starting the community's celebration of Singapore's 30th anniversary with a dance. — Picture by ALPHONSO CHAN.

## Sikh community starts its own self-help council

By Tan Yong Meng

SIKHS in Singapore have started their own self-help group to deal with the community's problems.

The new Punjabi-Sikh Welfare Council will look into such concerns as the erosion of family values and the welfare needs of individuals and groups among the 15,000 Sikhs here.

Acting Environment Minister and Senior Minister of State for Defence Teo Chee Hean said the council last night at the community's 30th anniversary at a field opposite the Central Sikh Temple in Serangoon Road.

Sikh Advisory Board chairman Bhajan Singh told The Sunday Times the council's main aim was to provide a

mechanism to organise and co-ordinate self-help programmes.

He said: "There are rising social and value concerns as a result of the erosion of the family unit and the increasing problems such as drug addiction among Sikh youths."

The council will have a core of 25 volunteers from the professions, religious and social institutions to run welfare programmes. It plans to:

- Start a family service centre to provide counselling and later, a crisis centre;
- Start a prison counselling and rehabilitative programme to offer inmates religious and social counselling;
- Provide companionship and care to terminally-ill patients in a hospital visits programme; and
- Give financial help to needy people.

The community has al-

ready raised more than \$1.5 million for the council.

It has invited top Sikh businessman and philanthropist Kartar Singh Thakral to be its honorary patron and Toa Payoh GRC MP Davinder Singh and nominated MP Kanwaljit Soin to be advisers.

Last night, Rear-Adm (NS) Teo said the Sikhs should continue to work within the context of the Indian community here and the larger Singaporean community, so it can retain its own identity while sharing and contributing to a culturally richer and more vibrant nation.

By linking up with the Ministry of Community Development, the Singapore Indian Development Association and other agencies, Sikhs can add to the available national resources to meet their welfare needs, he added.



### Planting the seeds for fund raising at the launch

Much of the early fund-raising before the launch was done within a few eventful weeks. The first to be approached were the Thakral brothers, S Kartar Singh Thakral and S Mohinder Singh Thakral. Their prompt commitment of \$300,000 each provided a solid foundation and catalyst for the fund-raising team to seek commitments from other prominent Sikh businessmen, professionals and from all Sikh institutions.

The formal launch of the Sikh Welfare Council in October 1995 also marked the formal fund-raising for SIWEC, where it raised over \$1.7 million from the founding trustees, Sikh institutions and other well-wishers. This provided the impetus for the welfare activities to commence, alleviating concern about sustainability and sources of future funds.

### Funding commitments by Founding Trustees and Sikh Institutions

Founding Trustees	
S Kartar Singh Thakral	\$300,000
S Mohinder Singh Thakral	\$300,000
S Naranjan Singh Brahmpura	\$101,000
S Manmohan Singh Thakral	\$80,000
S Gurcharan Singh Narula	\$55,000
S Mahn Singh Bajaj	\$51,000
S Jagjit Singh Sekhon	\$51,000
S Kartar Singh Dalamnangal	\$25,000
S Daljit Singh Gaggarbhana	\$20,000

Sikh Institutions	
Central Sikh Gurdwara Board	\$125,000
Singapore Khalsa Association	\$100,000
Sri Guru Singh Sabha	\$51,000
Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan	\$51,000
Sri Guru Nanak Sat Sang Sabha	\$51,000
Khalsa Dharmak Sabha	\$51,000
Gurdwara Sahib Yishun	\$51,000
Isteri Satsang – Singh Sabha	\$11,000
Isteri Satsang – Katong	\$11,000
Isteri Satsang – CST	\$11,000
Isteri Satsang – Silat Road	\$11,000
Sikh Missionary Society	\$5,500
Sikh Business Association	\$5,500

## Our Founding Patron



**S Kartar Singh Thakral**

## Our Founding Trustees



**S Mohinder Singh  
Thakral**



**S Naranjan Singh  
Brahmpura**



**S Daljit Singh  
Randhawa**



**S Gurcharan Singh  
Narula**



**S Mahn Singh  
Bajaj**



**S Jagjeet Singh  
Sehgal**



**S Jagjit Singh  
Sekhon**



**Dr Choor Singh  
Sidhu**



**S. Amir Singh**



**S Kartar Singh  
Dalamnangal**



**S Manmohan Singh  
Thakral**



**S. Wazir Singh  
Wasan**

## First SIWEC Management Committee in 1995

In view of the strong commitment of leaders of the Sikh community institutions in setting up SIWEC, there was consensus that the organisation should be owned by the entire community and managed by a committee with representation from all the Sikh Institutions, as well as a few professionals.

The first SIWEC management committee comprised a mix of representatives from Sikh institutions, with other members drawn from the Singapore Sikh Resource Panel (SSRP):



**Dr Sorinder Singh**  
*Chairman*



**Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada**  
*Vice-Chairman*



**Mr Harmit Singh Gandhi**  
*Secretary*



**Mr Sarwan Singh**  
*Assistant Secretary*



**Mr Nirmal Singh**  
*Treasurer*



**Mr Surjit Singh Wasan**  
*Assistant Treasurer*

Committee Members			
Mr Jaswant Singh Gill	Mr Jaswant Singh Bandal	Mr Taranjit Singh Grewal	Mr Balbeer Singh Mangat
Ms R. Kirpal Kaur	Ms Sermit Kaur	Mr Nachatar Singh Sandhu	Mr Gurdip Singh Usma
Mr Luck Singh	Mr Param Ajeet Singh Bal	Mr Kaka Singh	Mr Sarban Singh
Mr Kashmir Singh	Mr Deep Singh	Dr Amar Kaur	Ms Perminder Kaur
Mr Gurbachan Singh	Mr Diljit Singh	Mr Jasmail Singh Khalsa	LTC Mejar Singh Gill
Dr Kuldip Singh	Mr Baldev Singh	Mrs Biant Singh	

## Establishing SIWEC Operations

SIWEC's first Chairman, Dr Sorinder Singh, reflected, "SIWEC started on a sound financial footing when it commenced operations at Level 3 of the Central Sikh Temple (CST). We were grateful to the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board (CSGB) for freeing up space for us to work from a modest office. Besides saving on operational overheads, we were fortunate to be located centrally in an area well-served by public transport."

It was determined that SIWEC would operate a 24-hour community hotline as a priority from the onset, whilst consolidating ongoing volunteer-led initiatives such as bereavement support, counselling of incarcerated Sikhs and hospital visits. Subsequently, SIWEC launched new initiatives such as financial support to disadvantaged families, community health screening and students' education mentoring.

In tandem, a value inculcation, social awareness and nation-building programme was introduced, to anchor the younger members of the community in Sewa (Selfless Service), while raising awareness of SIWEC's presence, its mission, as well as its range of welfare programmes and activities to assist disadvantaged individuals and vulnerable families.

Dr Sorinder Singh recalls, "Immediately following the launch event on 14 October 1995, SIWEC established its modest office at the third level of Central Sikh Temple. We were fortunate to employ Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada from the outset in December 1995, as senior welfare officer".

"SINDA was very gracious to accept Jasbir for on-the-job training and mentoring at its Family Service Centre (FSC). They also helped to train 33 Sikh volunteers. The early links to SINDA's FSC helped sharpen our staff's working knowledge of proper processes and documentation responsibilities of welfare officers."

"Jasbir worked solo for about two years until Ms Indrejit Kaur joined us in January 1998. He manned our 24 hours/7 days community hotline for the first couple of years. The hotline enabled those in need to contact SIWEC at any time, in the day or night."

The rationale for having one male and one female staff was to be inclusive and able to deal with respective gender cases sensitively, while protecting client confidentiality. Both officers also worked together on complex family cases and in organising community outreach and fund-raising activities in subsequent years."

Dr Sorinder praised the pioneer welfare officers who had each served for about 15 years with the Council. "Jasbir & Indrejit had both served with distinction and dedication throughout my tenure. I am proud to have seen them grow professionally and to know that they are now both established as well-regarded social service practitioners in their respective roles — Jasbir in Melbourne, and Indrejit in Singapore."

## SIWEC Chairman's Update 2008

*It has been a challenging experience as there was no similar model in the rest of the Sikh world which we could learn from and emulate. We moved through relatively uncharted waters in the conceptualisation, planning, working out of programmes and activities of the SIWEC.*

*It has been a rich and rewarding experience heading the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC). It is the community's first ever national-level effort to address the welfare concerns and needs of the entire community. It has been a challenging experience as there was no similar model in the rest of the Sikh world which we could learn from and emulate. We moved through relatively uncharted waters in the conceptualisation, planning and working out of programmes and activities of the SIWEC.*

*Charity, welfare and selfless service are central to the Sikh way of life. It is not surprising therefore that welfare work was an integral part of the functioning of Gurdwaras — the core Sikh community institutions in Singapore. Thus the welfare concerns of the community prior to the setting up of SIWEC in 1995 were addressed by individual Gurdwaras based on their institutional resources.*

*However, concerns had begun to surface from the early 1990s, especially after the setting up of the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation to look after the Punjabi language education needs. The entire community felt that there should similarly be a mechanism to look after the welfare needs*

*of the community. The concerns were based on the following factors:*

- *There was a lack of an overall welfare policy for the community as a whole;*
- *There was increasing evidence of needy Sikh families and dislocated individuals, who required social, emotional, moral, financial and spiritual support, turning to other faiths;*
- *Sikh Gurdwaras were busy fulfilling their spiritual and ceremonial roles and did not have the staff to take on the welfare role on a systematic basis; and*
- *There was a need to professionalise welfare services in the context of the government policies and changing Sikh community needs.*



*Dr Sorinder Singh  
SIWEC Chairman, 1995–2009*



*The Sikh Welfare Council was launched in October 1995 in the context of the above socio-economic milieu. The constitution provided that representatives from all Sikh institutions sit on the Council to mobilise community support together with a group of professionals with expertise from various fields. The far-sighted decision by the community to set up SIWEC has paid dividends. For more than a decade now, the organisation has through its volunteers and two full-time staff catered for the welfare of the entire community by:*

- Providing regular financial and material support for more than 50 Sikh families at any one time;*
- Providing counselling, emotional and spiritual support to nearly 200 families every year;*
- Carrying out hospital visits to critically ill patients to provide support to both the families concerned and the patients in question;*
- Assisting Sikh families in optimising on the resources and services provided by CDCs, MCYS, FSCs and SINDA;*
- Arranging for weekly visits to prisons and DRCs to provide moral support and spiritual counselling to Sikh inmates; and*
- Providing bereaved families with emotional, spiritual and administrative support at various stages.*

*In the context of the above, SIWEC provides a 24-hour hotline (Tel: 6299 9234) to attend to welfare needs of the members of the Community around the clock.*

*Not many small communities like ours have such comprehensive welfare services. However the confidential nature of welfare work may result in much of the good work done by SIWEC going unpublicised except for services like bereavement services where the general Sikh public is present. This perhaps is the universal characteristic of all welfare organisations in the world.*

*While SIWEC has fulfilled the role for which it was set up, it continues to face challenges in the following areas:*

- The need for stabilised funding;*
- The requirement for more volunteers to come forward and serve in various areas; and*
- Carrying out needs assessment to cater for the changing welfare needs of the community.*

*The community too needs to keep this in mind and support SIWEC.*

*I wish to place on record my appreciation for all the volunteers who have contributed countless man-hours to serve the needs of individuals and families in the community.*

***Extract from SIWEC Sarbat da Bhalia Newsletter, 2008***

## Our Pioneer Staff

Up to the point in 1995 when approached to join the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC), Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada was a Regional Sales Manager and had never considered a job-switch. He had already been involved in community Sewa in various areas, while working in the sales management line with 17 staff under his supervision.

The invitation to serve the Sikh community as its first professional Sikh senior welfare officer seemed challenging in a pioneering field. “Little did I realise then that I would end up serving more than 14 years of my life with SIWEC!” Jasbir recounted.

“The first major event I was involved in was the launch of SIWEC held in conjunction with the fund-raising Sikh community dinner to celebrate Singapore’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence.”

For the first two years, Mr Jasbir recalls, “I literally worked OMO (one-man operation), with guidance from Chairman SIWEC Dr Sorinder Singh Toor, Chairman, Sikh Advisory Board Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada and SAB Secretary, S Harmit Singh Gandhi.”

***“I recall the Sewa of clearing up the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor storeroom at the Central Sikh Temple (CST) which had been chosen as the SIWEC office. I brought in filing cabinets, a worktable and fan for the first few months. Later, we managed to get the air-conditioning installed in the stuffy room to convert it into a decent working-space”.***

Faced with a steep learning curve in the administration of welfare and social work, Jasbir was grateful for the on-the-job attachment with SINDA coordinated by SIWEC Chairman, Dr Sorinder with the help of Mr Bhajan, a founding member of SINDA and member of SINDA, Executive Council.

“The Manager at SINDA Family Service Centre, Mdm Raksha, was a rich source of knowledge, specialist expertise and guidance. Her valuable advice and mentoring gave me the confidence to set SIWEC on a sound footing in several ways; establishing the basic systems and processes for our budding programmes at SIWEC, including the proper documentation of cases and maintenance of records of all assistance (in cash or kind) provided to all clients in each programme.”

Working solo meant that working seven days a week became the norm for Jasbir. “I held the SIWEC 24/7 hotline while conducting field visits to families we served, those in hospitals and to counsel Sikh inmates.”

After almost two years as the sole full-time staff helped by some volunteers, Jasbir was asked to look out for a suitable female colleague to share the growing workload of the council. Mr Jasbir



*Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada  
Pioneer staff of SIWEC,  
1995–2010*



Mr Jasbir organised logistics operations support for the Sarbat da Bhalla/Racial and Religious Harmony marathon series from 1999 to 2009.

said, “I recommended Ms Indrejit Kaur as I felt that her character and temperament were well-suited to the role of a welfare officer. She helped in the administrative work and widened our accessibility to female clients.”

Asked about the most memorable aspects of his time with SIWEC, Mr Jasbir said, “Seeing ex-inmates whom we had counselled for years finally reform and turning over a new leaf. Also, visiting the sick and terminally ill (with HIV in some cases) was something we embraced whole-heartedly as part of our community Sewa. I found it especially meaningful and fulfilling doing Sukhmani Sahib prayers and Simran (chanting of Waheguru mantra) during those visits. Helping families through bereavements at times posed particularly challenging situations to manage. However, over time, we learned to approach each situation with grace and to provide grief counselling to family members.”

Mr Jasbir recounted “I have fond memories of working with many Sikh programme volunteers, who came forward regularly to support bereavement, assist with hospital visits, provide education support, go on prison and DRC visits, and those who provided pro bono medical screening and legal aid services for the community.”

Looking back, Mr Jasbir reflected fondly on the community support he witnessed during various SIWEC-organised community-based events such as the annual SIWEC Flag Days, which were organised with the support of all the Sikh institutions, students and teachers of the SSEF; the historic cycling expedition from Ipoh to Singapore and the Malacca-Singapore Charity Ride in aid of SIWEC; the annual Sarbat da Bhalla/Racial and Religious Harmony, Round-the-Island overnight runs; as well as SIWEC’s annual participation in the Vesakhi Mela, organised by the Singapore Khalsa Association.

“Each event brought members of the community together in solidarity for a common cause in the spirit of Sarbat da Bhalla. It was an exhilarating experience to witness the community spirit come alive during these events.”

During his time with SIWEC, Mr Jasbir completed his tertiary education in counselling. He shared, “Counselling is an area close to my heart and was core to my work in SIWEC. I also had the opportunity to attend short courses related to my work as a Senior Welfare Officer, to serve the needs of the community. I later became a certified traumatologist after attending a course in the post-September 11 period, conducted in Singapore by trainers from the Institute of Traumatology from the USA.” “The time I spent with SIWEC during its formative years, was indeed rewarding professionally, emotionally and spiritually. In some ways, it was a God-sent opportunity to feel the essence and spirit of *Jan Ki Sewa Utam Kamma*.”

Mr Jasbir left SIWEC in 2010 and moved to Melbourne, Australia, where he continues to be active in community support work. He founded the Sikh Australian Support for Family Violence (SASFV) organisation, of which he is the Director.

Ms Indrejit Kaur joined the Sikh Welfare Council on 15 January 1998 after being approached by the then Senior Welfare Officer, Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada. The organisation needed another staff member as operations expanded.

“Not having any prior experience in social work as I was from a business marketing background, Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada was my mentor during the early years. I am truly grateful to him for his professional guidance. My role as a welfare officer was multifocal. It entailed providing guidance as a counsellor, linking families to assistance networks as a social worker and extending extensive support to bereaved families.”

Ms Indrejit was also involved in SIWEC’s regular community outreach and annual fund-raising activities such as the Racial and Religious Harmony Runs and Flag Days, to support the various programmes.

Ms Indrejit recounts, “Besides collaborations within the Sikh community, I also cherished the opportunity of working with partner organisations such as Singapore Prison Service, Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association and the Singapore After-Care Association. This collaboration enabled the Sikh Welfare Council to better meet the needs of the incarcerated and their families whom we served.”

During her tenure at SIWEC she continued to pursue her education and now holds a Master of Science (Professional Counselling), specialising in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

In 2009, Ms Indrejit represented the Sikh Welfare Council as a panellist at a forum organised by the Singapore Council of Women’s Organisations (SCWO) to improve the enforcement of maintenance orders. “It was a moment that I recall with much pride.”

Ms Indrejit left SIWEC in 2011. She remains active in community support work with a social service agency in Singapore.



*Ms Indrejit Kaur d/o Lal Singh  
First female staff of SIWEC,  
1998–2011*

She recalls, “SIWEC is a divine organisation that changed my life. True to its motto of Jan ki Sewa Utam Kamma (service to humanity is the highest deed), it was a platform where I was given the opportunity to serve my community and my people. My 15 years of service with the Sikh Welfare Council would not have been possible without the support of the management committee members who treated me like family. The Sikh Welfare Council brought out the best in me.”



*Ms Indrejit on the panel at the SCWO Forum.*





| SSEF students participating during Flag Day.

## Fund Raising and Community Engagement in the Early Years

Over the first decade, several community engagement and fund-raising initiatives were held and these included charity dinners, community flag days and round-the-island overnight marathon runs. Some of these events became annual focal points to rally the community behind the SIWEC flag and its mission, whilst helping to raise the organisation's presence and its profile.

One ground-up activity by volunteers was the charity cycling rides. The first cycling ride was from Ipoh to Singapore in 2001 raising \$60,000 and the second was from Malacca to Singapore in 2008, raising \$23,000.



| 2008 Malacca to Singapore Cycling Participants.



## Transition & Fresh Direction

The initial structure and operations of SIWEC served the community well for the first decade or so, as the lean SIWEC team of two full-time staff did their best to cope with the growing workload and challenges, guided by a small group of devoted volunteers serving on the Management Committee and helping to run SIWEC's programmes and services.

By late 2007–2008, the steady and unwavering support that SIWEC had enjoyed from stakeholders for the best part of the previous decade came under increasing strain and scrutiny. Perceptions formed among certain stakeholders that insufficient information about SIWEC's welfare activities was being shared. The growing calls for updates to stakeholders and the need to evaluate its work and impact coincided with a period of financial stress as well.

SIWEC's financial situation had gradually deteriorated after some institutions withheld monthly contributions, to extract greater accountability and visibility into SIWEC's activities and its direction. Questions were mostly focused around the direction that SIWEC was taking, amid growing concerns about its deteriorating financial health and over leadership renewal.

In December 2007, after the findings of the Project Fateh report were presented at the community leaders' retreat, the Sikh Advisory Board (SAB) called for a comprehensive review of the welfare needs of the Sikh community, in view of SIWEC's weakened funding situation.

### SIWEC Task Force

A Task Force was appointed to study the matter in depth. Led by Mr Inderjit Singh, the Task Force comprised Mr Surjit Singh Wasan (then Chairman of SAB), Mr Jarmal Singh, Mr Amarjit Singh Khaira, Mr Hernaikh Singh and Dr Narinder Kaur as members. Their mandate was to review SIWEC's prevailing structure and scope of its welfare activities, identify existing strengths and recommend key areas for improvement to the community leadership for endorsement.

The Task Force visited and met with three established volunteer welfare organisations run by different faith groups — the Christian Welfare Home, Jamiyah Children's Home, and the Metta Home (a Buddhist organisation). Time was also spent better appreciating challenges arising from SIWEC's structure. The Task Force's final report was presented to the community leadership in May 2008.



*Mr S Inderjit Singh  
Chairman, SIWEC Task Force*

## Task Force Report — Study Approach and Key Insights

Their key impressions from engaging with the three established VWOs were that each organisation had been awarded the Institution of Public Character (IPC) status, all demonstrating a strong governance structure with emphasis on transparency and accountability, with detailed standard operating procedures.

Besides government funds, each organisation tapped public and private sector companies extensively through various publicity channels, harnessing multiple fund-raising avenues such as charity golf events and fun fairs, besides placing donation boxes at various establishments.

Structure-wise, there were strong and clear organisation structures with a distinct separation of responsibilities between the governing board and the executive management team running operations. There were established sub-committees focused on specific areas with periodic reporting to the governing board, with a proper accounting and budgeting system. Notably, each organisation placed strong emphasis on deliberate succession planning to keep the organisation vibrant and responsive to the changing environment.

The report credited SIWEC for having done relatively well despite its challenges and unique constraints. It had met some of the most pressing community needs identified at the onset; by providing rations and funds to those in need, bereavement and grief support and help rendered at funerals, as well as regular counselling and visits to prisons and drug rehabilitation centres. The two welfare officers had also done a commendable job as pillars of SIWEC for their unstinting commitment to manning the hotline 24/7 and serving the community with integrity and dedication.

While crediting the Sikh community leadership for their role in launching SIWEC 13 years earlier and propelling its early growth momentum, the Task Force concluded that the organisation had reached an important crossroads, requiring fresh impetus to steer SIWEC into a new phase of renewal and growth.

## Task Force's Recommendations

The Task Force's specific recommendations were grouped into six areas: organisation structure, service, governance, public relations and communications, fund-raising, and volunteer and donor management.

First, in organisation, the Task Force proposed a Council (including 14 Sikh Institutional members) and a smaller management committee, (instead of the prevailing 25 members); suggested a rotating system with limited terms of office to ensure continued leadership renewal; as well as clearly delineated responsibilities between the council and the executive management team. To ensure the SIWEC office was organised more effectively for daily operations, the Task Force strongly recommended recruiting a full-time professional to direct fund-raising efforts and lead the operations team.

Second, on service, the Task Force raised concerns that some disadvantaged Sikh families were falling between the cracks. It proposed streamlining coordination for all services (social, emotional, financial) to strengthen collaboration between SIWEC and the Gurdwaras.

Third, on governance, the report noted that 'rightly or wrongly, there was a perception among some stakeholders of a lack of transparency within SIWEC.' It raised the concern that such impressions would undermine SIWEC's good work and future efforts to garner continued support for funds if they were not decisively addressed. The report advocated regular

meetings to update the Council members on SIWEC's achievements and challenges, for SIWEC to share its vision and long-term plans, and to seek guidance and buy-in from its stakeholders through such interaction.

In addition, the Task Force exhorted SIWEC to aspire towards IPC status, which entailed a concerted effort to strengthen documentation of its operating procedures and to devise clear codes of conduct and ethics to guide the work of its staff and volunteers.

Whilst affirming the importance of leadership continuity, the Task Force called for a clear and well-planned succession for SIWEC to enable fresh leadership to steer the organisation into the next stage, building upon the excellent work of the incumbent leadership team.

Fourth, on public relations and communications, the Task Force diagnosed that poor appreciation of the good work done by SIWEC was likely caused by a paucity of information about SIWEC and success stories shared with the community. As such, while dutifully protecting clients' confidentiality, SIWEC had either "failed to get the deserved credit for its work, or inadvertently suffered the misperception of not doing enough or not doing the right thing." To garner continual support for SIWEC's work, a deliberate plan for regular communications and outreach had to better engage stakeholders, partners, volunteers, and the community at large.

Fifth, on fund-raising, the Task Force recommended setting up a dedicated fund-raising committee to steer two to three fund raising events annually, and

to also look beyond the Sikh institutions to source for funds, whilst intensifying publicity and outreach to secure more GIRO donation commitments from the wider community.

Sixth, the Task Force proposed implementing a volunteer and donor management database and renewed efforts to recruit more volunteers as it was not sustainable for SIWEC's declining pool of dedicated volunteers to continue doing most of the heavy lifting.

Transitional Management Committee (2009)

The period between 2008 and 2009 was a trying time for SIWEC as it underwent a necessary transition. The incumbent management committee challenged some of the Task Force’s assertions while highlighting SIWEC’s significant achievements despite the funding challenges faced.

Meanwhile, those lobbying for change embraced the report as an exhaustive blueprint for SIWEC’s renewal and potential to evolve into a professionally run charity with a stronger structure, strong governance practices, and a healthier financial status.

To break the deadlock around SIWEC’s transition and future development, a compromise was mediated for representatives from the two groups to nominate four members each to run SIWEC jointly on an interim basis.

In June 2009, a transitional management committee took over formally from incumbent Chairman Dr Sorinder Singh and Secretary Mr Harjeet Singh Rikhraj.

Transitional SIWEC Committee 2009	
SIWEC Chairman	Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon
Vice-Chairman	Mr Harminder Singh
Secretary	Mr Bhopinder Singh
Assistant Secretary	Mr Gurdip Singh Usma
Treasurer	Mr Inderpal Singh
Assistant Treasurer	Mr Balbeer Singh Mangat

Given the divergent perspectives, the transitional management committee faced a contentious period as its members tried to forge consensus on the way forward for SIWEC.

Pioneer Chairman  
Dr Sorinder Singh (right)  
with his successor  
Mr Jagjit Singh (JJ)  
Sekhon (left).



# A Decade of Renewal and Growth

## (2009–2020)

### Revision of SIWEC's Constitution (2009)

The most substantive achievement during the transition was to revise SIWEC's constitution. Mr Gurdip Singh Usma consulted the office of the Commissioner of Charities (COC) to include revisions designed to significantly strengthen SIWEC's management structure. The changes positioned SIWEC to be compliant with the stringent requirements to meet the requirements to be accorded Institute of Public Character (IPC) status.

By October 2009, after a few iterations of the SIWEC constitution had been refined with further inputs from the COC and the Registry of Societies, the transitional management committee called an Extraordinary General Meeting followed at once by a management committee meeting to adopt the revised constitution.

For greater effectiveness and efficiency, the revised constitution clearly delineated the roles of Council members (all Sikh Institutions), from those of members of the Management Committee (who were elected by the Council from ordinary or lifetime members of one of the Sikh institutions) who would steer SIWEC's operations and future growth.

After the revised constitution had been endorsed and duly adopted, the second management committee was duly elected, with Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon as Chairman and Mr Gurdip Singh Usma as Vice-

Chairman, supported by a team of management committee members.

### New Management

The second management committee helmed by Mr Jagjit Sekhon focused on three main areas; restoring SIWEC's financial health, strengthening corporate governance and internal processes to follow IPC requirements, and widening community outreach to raise awareness of its programmes and services.

SIWEC was awarded IPC status in early November 2009 following the revisions to its constitution. Conferment of IPC status meant SIWEC became



*Mr Jagjit Singh (JJ) Sekhon  
SIWEC Chairman, 2009–2013*



a registered charity whose donors were able to enjoy income tax exemption. This helped attract more donors to claim tax reliefs from their annual assessable income, based on the amount donated.

Conferment of IPC status meant that SIWEC had to strengthen documentation of all its financial transactions and operational processes, HR policies and personnel files, besides maintaining proper records of monthly management committee and executive committee meeting minutes, including sharing its annual and bi-annual reports through its public communications channels.

In 2010, SIWEC registered as an associate member with the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), denoting that the Council was active in providing social support programmes for its clients. However, SIWEC's primary function could not yet be categorised as "providing a direct social service".

Meanwhile, a concerted effort began to strengthen ties with more government and social service agencies to bolster SIWEC's information and referral service, so that anyone seeking help could access available community resources across the island promptly.



| First SIWEC flyer after securing IPC status.

## Sustained Fund-Raising Impetus

The management committee actively explored alternative sources to fund SIWEC's operations, beyond the established fund-raising channels such as the annual community flag-day, GIRO donations and monthly contributions from institutions.

One of the more significant fund-raising events was when Mr JJ Sekhon secured former President S R Nathan's support to autograph 17 copies of his book *Winning against the Odds*, for donations of up to \$10,000. President Nathan graciously hosted the donors and Sikh community leaders at the Istana for the book presentation. The total amount raised for SIWEC was \$170,000.

Another event that involved the whole community was the Welfare Day that was held at the various Gurdwaras and Singapore Khalsa Association to both create awareness of SIWEC and raise funds at the same time. These were held in conjunction with the various Gurburabs or Vesakhi Mela celebrated at these Sikh Institutions.

Other volunteer-led fund-raising events included activities like dinner and dance and high tea cum fashion show.

The ladies within the Sikh Community in SKA Ladies Wing and Isteri Satsang Sabha in Central Sikh Temple also gave a helping hand by raising funds for SIWEC.

Details of fund raising are provided in the ***Our Fund-Raising Activities*** section of this publication.



*The SIWEC Staff Team in 2011 — administration executive Ms Dimuthu, with welfare officers Ms Indrejit Kaur and Mr Ranjit Singh Vahan at an outreach event at Gurdwara Katong.*

## Strengthening the Operations Team

To run SIWEC's operations effectively, it became obvious that the office required another staff member to undertake the administration executive's role. First, to strengthen documentation and administrative support in SIWEC, and secondly to free the two overworked welfare officers to focus primarily on programme coordination, counselling, casework and bereavement support. In April 2010, the management committee committed to hiring a permanent administration executive as an immediate priority. The position was filled by Ms Dimuthu in May 2011.

When Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada left SIWEC in 2010 after having completed over 14 years of dedicated service with SIWEC, Mr Ranjit Singh Vahan was hired to work alongside Ms Indrejit Kaur for about two years.

Mr Jagjit mobilised resources from his healthcare and professional contacts to benefit SIWEC's clients. He co-opted a retired nurse, Mdm Sarjit Kaur, as a member of the management committee, to lead SIWEC's hospital visits and healthcare programme with her team of volunteer nurses. Mr Jagjit also committed the use of ambulances for transportation

of clients for medical appointments and nursing home stays at heavily subsidised rates, and pro bono for financially challenged clients.

Meanwhile, the search began for a suitable candidate for the SIWEC manager's position, to oversee the work of the staff and to plan and steer SIWEC's community engagement, outreach and fund-raising efforts. The position was filled in mid-2012 when SIWEC's financial situation was on a relatively sound footing.



*Retired nurse and SIWEC MC member Mdm Sarjit fully immersed herself with a team of volunteers in periodic community health screening during welfare days at the Gurdwaras, seniors' eldercare and active ageing activities, as well as the hospital visit programmes.*



*Then Vice-Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma recounted, “We wanted someone with an excellent working relationship with the Sikh institutions, besides being strong in fund-raising and administration. Mr Ranjit Singh Wahla fulfilled the requirements well, so we hired him in July 2012 to function as SIWEC’s first formally designated Manager.”*

### **SIWEC’s Voice & Face — Manager Ranjit Singh Wahla**

A warm smile, firm handshake, and an invitation to a cup of tea. This is how visitors to the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) office are greeted by SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit Singh Wahla. It is also how he makes everyone feel at ease and welcome, and this is important to him because:



*Mr Ranjit Singh  
Manager, SIWEC,  
Since 2012*

‘If someone comes to the office, it is usually because they require assistance through some of the services SIWEC provides. If we put ourselves in their shoes, we realise that individuals who are seeking help want to approach someone they feel comfortable with, like a friend. I try to be a friend to them and hope to help them the best I can.’

As manager at SIWEC, Mr Ranjit tries to be a friend to all who require assistance round-the-clock, all days of the year. The entire team at SIWEC, including Mr Ranjit, are often called beyond typical office hours to respond to various needs of individuals in the community. They do this by taking the SIWEC hotline response phone back home with them and spring into action once calls come in for assistance. Mr Ranjit himself often responds to calls, after a full day in the office and into the wee hours of the night. There is no doubt about his resolve to assist and serve others, but one does wonder, how does this all come together for someone who would otherwise possibly be enjoying his retirement.

Undeniably, the ability to serve effectively also requires discipline. For Mr Ranjit, this sense of duty and discipline likely came from his many years in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) where he served as a Warrant Officer from July 1975 to June 2012. While he was still with the SAF, Mr Ranjit was actively involved with the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board (CSGB). Volunteering and the importance of serving in the community was impressed upon Mr Ranjit early in life as well. He comes from a family that has been actively engaged in community service.

It came as no surprise therefore that upon his retirement from the SAF in 2012, Mr Ranjit joined SIWEC. Over this time, he has firmly established himself as the face and voice of Sikh welfare within the Sikh community and beyond.

*It is a sustained outreach in the community to encourage voluntarism and seek donations. Our volunteers realise that they can contribute as they develop and pursue their interests and make friends with others. There is immense satisfaction from being part of a committed group of volunteers like our friends from Ride-2-Serve (R2S). It is also a significant example of how volunteers can be meaningfully engaged and connected with SIWEC.*

Within the community, Mr Ranjit regularly communicates SIWEC's initiatives, services, and various platforms. This includes key services such as education support services, spending time and meeting with clients such as the elderly who are living alone, and bereavement to name a few. Mr Ranjit also advocates for and personally gets involved in some of the more novel and even unique SIWEC initiatives. This includes coordinating and participating in special fund-raising events such as the annual Ride-2-Serve charity cycle rides where volunteers cycle from Malacca, Malaysia to Singapore. Mr Ranjit shares that Ride-2-Serve is an important initiative for SIWEC:

"It is a sustained outreach in the community to encourage voluntarism and seek donations. Our volunteers realise that they can contribute as they develop and pursue their interests and make friends with others. There is immense satisfaction from being part of a committed group of volunteers like our friends from Ride-2-Serve (R2S). It is also a significant example of how volunteers can be meaningfully engaged and connected with SIWEC."

R2S organiser Luvinderpal Singh shared, "Ranjit is one of the supporting pillars for the success of R2S. His jovial personality never fails to put a smile on our

faces during the various events we hold! All of us at Ride 2 Serve cherish his contributions and are glad to have him on our team."

Another measure of the success of SIWEC over the years is cultivating relationships and establishing partnerships with agencies beyond the Sikh community. On this front, Mr Ranjit has worked closely with agencies and stakeholders such as the National Council of Social Service, Agency for Integrated Care, Health Promotion Board, Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital, Counsel for Third Age, Singapore Prison Service, various social service agencies, nursing homes and community hospitals, Institute of Mental Health, Ashram and other halfway houses. The motivation for such partnerships was to ensure the optimal use of resources to cater to needs in the community.

However, Mr Ranjit also emphasises that these partnerships have enabled organisations to share best practices. "The SIWEC team has shared with others and at the same time learnt from these various organisations how we can improve. This must be the way. We must always look at how we can better meet the needs of others in the community through this spirit of sharing and cooperating with others".

Establishing partnerships with other organisations also reflects the humility with which Mr Ranjit goes about his service as manager at SIWEC. It is also the tone he sets for the rest of his team, that they always remain open to learning and if necessary also rethinking approaches to serve effectively in the community. If indeed SIWEC has been able to fulfil its mission of Sarbat da Bhalla over the past years, it is in no small way due to the commitment of individuals such as Mr Ranjit and his team.



## SIWEC Office Location

### Temporary location of SIWEC Office at Singapore Khalsa Association

Between late 2010 and August 2012, the SIWEC office shifted from Towner Road to its interim location at the Singapore Khalsa Association (SKA) premises on Level 3 while the Central Sikh Temple building underwent major upgrading and renovation works.



Welfare Officer Sanjiv Singh at SIWEC's interim office @ SKA Level 3.

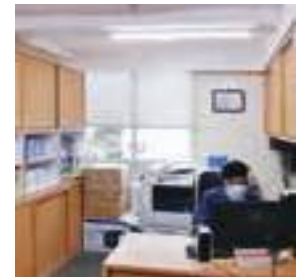


SIWEC AGM 2012 was held at the SKA Conference Room.



## New SIWEC Office at Central Sikh Temple

In August 2012, SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit organised the move back to occupy the present office on Level 6 of the CST building. The new office provided sufficient space to accommodate the expanded SIWEC team of up to six staff, with a counselling room next door for staff to engage clients in private.



## Inaugural SIWEC Appreciation Day on 2011

In March 2011, SIWEC organised the Inaugural Appreciation Day tea event to formalise the practice of recognising our volunteers, institutional stakeholders, community partners, donors, and well-wishers.

Member of Parliament Inderjit Singh officiated as Guest of Honour. Among volunteers honoured at the event were SIWEC's first Chairman Dr Sorinder Singh and Mr Kashmir Singh Suropada, a long-serving volunteer with the prisons' counselling programme.





## Leadership Renewal

Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan, who served as Secretary (2009–2011) and Vice-Chairman (2011–2013), stepped up as Chairman in 2013. He succeeded Mr Jagjit (JJ), after the latter had completed three terms, including the transitional one.

Mr Amarjit recounted, “I was privileged to serve as Vice-Chairman until JJ handed the baton over to me. JJ had adopted a very hands-on approach. He accompanied the welfare staff to visit every household served by SIWEC under our Food on the Table and Financial Assistance programmes and made a conscious effort to personally attend Sikh bereavements at Mandai.

“He also took a personal interest in all Sikh patients admitted to hospital and worked closely with our volunteer nurses in the hospital visit programme. JJ also graciously committed the pro bono use of Civic ambulance resources in many instances to help our clients and others who required aid. Even after he stepped aside as Chair to function as our Advisor, we were grateful for his continued interest, active support, and commitment of Civic ambulances. This extended to the pro bono commitment of an ambulance to provide safety cover during the charity cycling events in Malaysia.”

The committee led by Mr Amarjit ensured that new initiatives were launched with closer tracking of programme outcomes using specified key performance indicators. Measures to strengthen SIWEC’s human resource processes to better evaluate staff and reward good performance were also put in place. In parallel, a review of the staff’s job descriptions and benchmarking of salaries to NCSS norms was also undertaken.

The period 2013 to 2015 was one of sustained renewal and noteworthy progress in SIWEC. The new management committee led by Mr Amarjit included more women, with Mdm Gurmit Sroya serving as one of the two Vice-Chairpersons. She championed programmes to uplift young children from vulnerable families by investing in their education and development.



*Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon and Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan at the 2013 Council Review Meeting at CST.*



*Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan  
SIWEC Chairman, 2013–2015*



SIWEC Chairman Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan's address.



Mr S Devendran (representing SINDA) spoke on pressing social issues.

## SIWEC – 1<sup>st</sup> Retreat and Strategic Planning Seminar 2013

In November 2013, Mr Amarjit and his committee organised a day-long retreat and strategic planning-seminar. They were joined by 40 community leaders representing the Sikh institutions as well as invited guests from partner organisations such as SINDA and the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS). Community leaders engaged actively with valued inputs during the deliberations on the areas for SIWEC to focus its social support services and programmes.



Mr Ranjit Singh briefing on SIWEC's ongoing programmes.



Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan and management committee members deliberated to prioritise SIWEC's future focus areas for 2014 and beyond.





Active participation by  
community members.



## Full Membership of NCSS

In July 2014, SIWEC achieved full membership of NCSS after a two-year process that began in 2012. Soon after becoming Chairman in 2013, Mr Amarjit had met with CEO NCSS to revive the stalled process and give it renewed impetus. Full membership was secured after SIWEC had sent details highlighting its expanded programmes in service of the wider community.

Mr Amarjit remarked, “It was a proud moment for the community when SIWEC was finally accepted as a full member of NCSS. Looking back, I did not then fully grasp the immediate and long-term benefits that full membership would bring. The immediate benefit was that SIWEC became more visible to the larger Singaporean community. Also, membership helped enhance our credibility and recognition. This was the most significant milestone after we had achieved IPC status in 2009. Also, SIWEC became eligible for entirely new sources of programme funding. For example, we were identified as one of the eligible beneficiary agencies under the Care & Share Scheme and the President’s Challenge.”

*“It was a proud moment for the community when SIWEC was finally accepted as a full member of NCSS. Looking back, I did not then fully grasp the immediate and long-term benefits that full membership would bring. The immediate benefit was that SIWEC became more visible to the larger Singaporean community. Also, membership helped enhance our credibility and recognition. This was the most significant milestone after we had achieved IPC status in 2009. Also, SIWEC became eligible for entirely new sources of programme funding. For example, we were identified as one of the eligible beneficiary agencies under the Care & Share Scheme and the President’s Challenge.”*



## New SIWEC Initiatives and Programmes

### Education Support

The Academic Excellence programme was launched in late 2013 as a collaboration with the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF). A full-time education programme officer was employed in January 2014 to work with SSEF administrators, engage parents and teachers at Punjabi School, and coordinate the matching of identified students requiring help to suitable tutors. The AEP programme was reviewed annually and adjusted to address shortcomings and expand its focus as new insights came to light.

Working in close collaboration with SSEF, SIWEC launched the initiative to support students from financially challenged families studying in Punjabi School. The first disbursement of funding was for 108 students in the year 2014, amounting to \$43,200 in

total. This covered the cost of books, uniforms, school fees and examination fees for Punjabi School.

### Launch of Eldercare and Senior Citizens Programme

In 2014, the Sunehri Saheliaan active ageing programme for seniors was formally launched at the Central Sikh Temple in collaboration with the Council for Third Age (C3A). Building on initial success with the first group of about 30 women at CST, the volunteer team later initiated a mixed group called Sunehray Pal (Golden Friends) at the Silat Road Temple in 2015. In late 2018, another mixed group of Sunehray Pal was established at Yishun Gurdwara by volunteers. Over the years, our devoted volunteers have organised joint outings for seniors to places of interest across Singapore, to neighbouring islands such as Sentosa, Bintan and Batam, as well as places like Machap, Port Dickson and Cameron Highlands in Malaysia.



| November 2015 – Sunehri Saheliaan & Sunehray Pal outing to Universal Studios, Sentosa.



## Revival of Fund-Raising Cycling Events

In 2013, Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa approached the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board and SIWEC with a compelling proposal to revive the Malacca to Singapore charity bike ride, as a platform to raise funds in support of SIWEC's new initiatives.

With Bike Aid pioneer Mr Manjit Singh Sevea advising on safety, organisation and logistics, Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa spear headed the organisation of the first Ride for Charity (RfC) and set up the Harmony on Wheels (HoW) community in tandem.

*"It was a very timely injection of much-needed funds at a time when SIWEC had embarked on a growth plan to invest funds into new pilot programmes and to strengthen its lean staff team. At the time, it was the most significant contribution from a volunteer-led fund-raising initiative that SIWEC had ever received."*

Over the span of five years between 2014 and 2018, Mr Manjit successfully mobilised an inclusive community of like-minded riders, supporters and well-wishers to stage three successive fund-raising charity rides in Malaysia raising over \$500,000 for SIWEC, including the 20% matching grants from Tote Board, excluding funds raised for Sunlove Abode.

Then SIWEC Chairman Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan who had seen the entire execution of RFC 2014 from Malacca through Batu Pahat and Johor Bahru back to Singapore recounted, "It was a very timely injection of much-needed funds at a time when SIWEC had embarked on a growth plan to invest funds into new pilot programmes and to strengthen its lean staff team. At the time, it was the most significant contribution from a volunteer-led fund-raising initiative that SIWEC had ever received."

Subsequently, together with the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board (CSGB), SIWEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding in April 2015 with Harmony on Wheels (HoW), which committed to raise funds annually for SIWEC as the primary beneficiary, with a reciprocal undertaking that SIWEC kept HoW updated on how the funds were used.



*MOU signing.  
From left: Gurcharan Singh (CSGB), Amarjit Singh Wasan (SIWEC), Manjit Singh Sevea (HoW) and Sasidharan Nair (Sunlove Abode).*

## Stabilising SIWEC's Financial Standing

In 2015, Mr Gurdip Singh Usma took over as Chairman from Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan. Mr Gurdip has been involved in SIWEC all along since its launch in 1995 and subsequently served as Vice-Chairman between 2009–2011. Over the past 30–40 years he has also been deeply involved in numerous Sikh institutions in Singapore, including as Chairman of SKA Board of Trustees, Vice-President of Central Sikh Gurdwara Board, Chairman of Silat Road Sikh Temple, Chairman of Sikh Centre and Vice President of the Malaysia Singapore Sikhs Sports Council. These links facilitated and enhanced SIWEC's networking amongst the Sikh institutions towards achieving its missions with tremendous support and contribution from every institution.



*Mr Gurdip Singh Usma  
SIWEC Chairman, 2015–2021*

## SIWEC – 2<sup>nd</sup> Retreat and Strategic Planning Seminar 2015

In 2015, the new management committee led by Mr Gurdip Singh Usma organised the second Strategic Planning Retreat to review SIWEC's operations and to consider its development plans for new programme initiatives and fund-raising priorities for the next 3–5 years.

After an introduction to SIWEC by Manager Ranjit Singh, Mr Gurdip outlined his vision of the key focus areas. A collective review of SIWEC's strengths and weaknesses was conducted, after which participants broke up into groups to deliberate on SIWEC's priority programmes, how to enhance its funding situation, outreach and communications channels, and propose measures to better serve our clients whilst enhancing SIWEC's visibility and awareness amongst the community.



*Mr Gurdip Singh Usma and Mr Ranjit Singh (inset) at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Retreat.*





Staff and Management Committee members shared perspectives on SIWEC's priorities.



## Optimising All Available Funding & Government Grants

Besides overseeing and enhancing our ongoing programmes, Mr Gurdip's management and financial skills steered SIWEC's focus towards disciplined corporate governance, strengthening operating procedures and process documentation and tapping fully on the various government funding schemes and grants. As a result of these efforts, SIWEC's financial position improved with healthy reserves of about \$2.9 million by 2020. This will enable SIWEC to continue to provide for its beneficiaries even during times when availability of new funds may be limited or not so forthcoming.

Over the period from 2015 to 2020, SIWEC accessed about \$2.5 million in government grants and funding from the various schemes for social service agencies and these included the following:

### Care & Share Grant

From 2016 to 2019, SIWEC received \$1,491,000 dollar for dollar matching grant from the Care & Share Programme for new initiatives started by SIWEC during this period. This included enhancing our Prison Counselling, Family Support and Education Support programmes.

### Tote Board Grants

All our cycling fund-raising projects between 2014 and 2020 have received between 20% and 100% matching grants from the Tote Board. All in, we have received about \$200,000 from the Tote Board as matching grants for our cycling fund-raising events during this period.

### President's Challenge Grant

SIWEC's Academic Excellence Programme was privileged to be part of the President's Challenge in 2018 receiving a \$65,000 grant in 2019.

### Bicentennial Fund Grant

As part of Singapore's Bicentennial celebrations in 2019, we applied for and received a \$400,000 dollar for dollar matching grant from the Bicentennial Fund in 2020.

### Work Life Grant

Since 2018, in line with the government's objective of a good work-life balance, SIWEC implemented flexible working hours, part time work and work-from-home arrangements. In 2019, SIWEC qualified for a \$28,000 Work Life Grant to be disbursed over a three-year period until 2022.

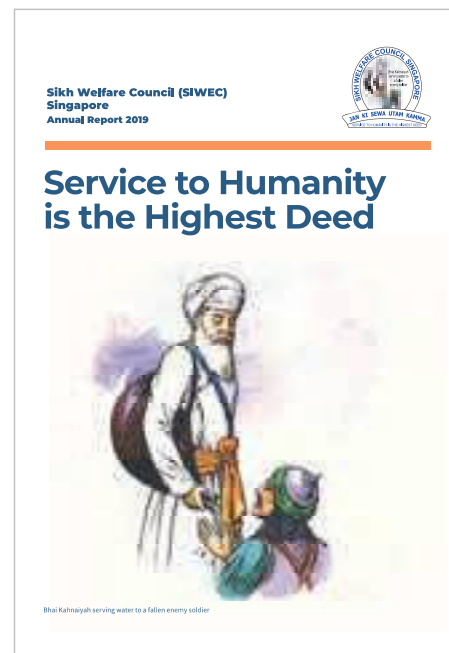
### VWO Capability Fund Grant

In 2019, SIWEC capitalised on the VWO Capability Fund (VCF) to receive a grant of \$14,160, amounting to 80% of the cost of engaging Shared Services for Charities (a social services consultancy) to document our human resource and finance manuals, develop a risk management strategy, and publish a comprehensive annual report.

We further tapped on VCF for an \$8,000 grant in 2020 to replace six of our computers with new laptops and enhanced our remote working and video-conferencing capabilities.

In 2021, SIWEC intends to apply for the same VCF Grant to receive an 80% subsidy to document our Programmes Operating Procedures Manual.

SIWEC 1<sup>st</sup> comprehensive published Annual Report 2019.



### **Covid-19 Grants and Job Support Scheme subsidies**

While Covid-19 had a tremendous impact on the activities and services of SIWEC, we were fortunate to be able to tap on government funding to minimise the financial impact on SIWEC. In all, we received about \$120,000 in various grants and subsidies provided by the government and government-related agencies in 2020.

### **Launch of Community Mediation Programme**

In 2017, SIWEC launched the community mediation initiative which involved providing free mediation service for members of the community to attempt to resolve intra-family disputes amicably, to avert potentially acrimonious disputes in court. Nine volunteers were trained as mediators by Ms Rina Kapanth Singh, a lawyer and mediator.

### **Community Outreach on New Government Initiatives**

Given Singapore's changing demographics and ageing society, SIWEC sustained its outreach at

Gurdwaras and other community touchpoints to strengthen healthcare awareness amongst our seniors. In addition, updates on new government schemes for seniors such as the Pioneer Generation Programme were organised, besides talks and workshops on active ageing, age-related chronic illnesses, succession matters, and dealing with bereavement and the loss of loved ones.

### **SIWEC Appreciation Day 2017**

On 1 April 2017, SIWEC hosted an Appreciation Tea event to recognise the contribution and support of all our community partners, volunteers and well-wishers. Guest of Honour Senior Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, and MP for Jalan Besar GRC Mr Heng Chee How endorsed SIWEC's role as a community-centred organisation constantly striving to support those who required assistance.

Those attending the event included representatives from several Sikh institutions, members of SIWEC's senior citizens programme (Sunehri Saheliaan and Sunehray Pal), some of our client-families, volunteers, donors, trustees, well-wishers, as well as representatives from our community partners such as SINDA, SANA, Singapore Prisons Service, IMH and various social service agencies.



*Mrs Sarjit Kaur Khosa presented SMS Heng with a Thank-You card designed by members of SIWEC's Senior Citizens' Programme.*



## SIWEC Appreciation Day 2019

SIWEC held its next Appreciation Day at Singapore Khalsa Association on 24 February 2019 with Mr Amrin Amin, then Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs and Health as Guest of Honour.



*Team SIWEC welcoming Mr Amrin Amin.*

## Impact of Covid-19 in 2020

### **Adapting SIWEC's operations in response to Covid-19 restrictions in 2020**

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 curtailed SIWEC's operations and fund-raising efforts in significant ways. Our staff worked from home and all our interviews, monthly meetings and consultations were done remotely using online applications like Zoom, Google Meet and via voice or video calls to clients.

When attendance at Mandai crematorium was limited to only 10 people by the authorities, SIWEC commissioned a live-streaming service for friends and relatives of bereaved families to take part in the cremation process from home. The cost of the service was initially absorbed by SIWEC during the circuit breaker period, as a gesture of solidarity and goodwill. During Phase 2 after measures were gradually eased to allow up to 20 people in July and 30 persons in August, the streaming service continued to be offered to bereaved families for a small fee of \$400, as restrictions continued to be in place.

All activities in our senior citizens programme at the Gurdwaras ceased in late January 2020 after seniors were named as a vulnerable group. Our volunteers continued to actively engage seniors at home via phone calls and exercise videos posted through the groups' social media chats.

Befriending visits to provide psycho-emotional support to our clients at their residences and in hospitals and homes for seniors were also suspended in February. Our healthcare ambassador was initially allowed to don full PPE to visit seniors in some nursing homes. All visits were completely suspended after a Covid-19 outbreak in a local nursing home. She then resorted to phone calls to check on the



| Livestreaming at Mandai.

well-being of all our seniors living alone in their own homes, as well as those living in homes for seniors and for the disabled. Arrangements were also made for meals from Gurdwaras to be delivered to those requiring such support.

### **Covid-19 Support for Education — 57 laptops for Punjabi language teachers**

During the circuit breaker, schools were closed and all teaching was home-based. This created a logistics problem as not every Punjabi language teacher was highly computer literate or had a personal laptop to conduct these lessons effectively. While SSEF handled the online curriculum portion, SIWEC stepped in to help with over \$50,000 to equip all the 57 Punjabi language teachers with laptops to enhance the delivery and teaching capabilities of the Punjabi Language Programme.

### **Impact of Covid-19 on our Fund-Raising Activities**

The 2020 Ride2Serve charity fund-raising event from Port Dickson to Singapore (via Malacca and Batu Pahat), which was originally scheduled for early March 2020, was postponed barely one week before the ride, for safety reasons in view of the unfolding pandemic situation here. All cycling training was also suspended during the circuit breaker period.

After Singapore went into Phase 2 in June, the R2S organising committee decided on a hybrid approach, including a virtual ride challenge for individual riders to complete 300 km indoors at home between October and November 2020. In addition, the organisers also planned a 85-100 km road ride in Singapore. On Sunday 13 December morning, 54 riders participated in the physical road-ride which was conducted in full compliance with prevailing guidelines on safe distancing and group size.





COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT

# Community Outreach

Over the years, the Sikh Welfare Council has organised and participated in various community outreach activities to fulfil two specific purposes.

The first has been a multi-pronged effort focused on community touchpoints to raise awareness of SIWEC's support programmes and promoting volunteerism by highlighting social issues and raising public health awareness amongst the assembled sangat. SIWEC's key platforms include Gurdwara Welfare Days to provide health screening, conduct awareness talks on government policies and subsidy schemes, as well as talks on legal matters and pressing social issues such as addiction.

Fund-raising is the second purpose of community outreach using organised activities such as the overnight marathon runs, cycling charity rides, SIWEC flag days, dinners & fashion shows and other social events. Taken together, all these activities help to rally the wider community in support of our mission to help uplift the disadvantaged in our community, in the spirit of Sarbat da Bhalla and Chardi Kala.



## Talks, Presentations and Health Screening

Over the years, SIWEC has conducted public health talks and screening with our partners to coincide with major Gurburabs or Vesakhi events at Gurdwaras or the SKA. We invite partners with relevant expertise to engage and educate members of the community. Topics ranged from the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle, raising public awareness of critical medical conditions, mental health, alcohol and drug addictions, updates on new government initiatives like the Pioneer Generation benefits scheme, as well as advice on legal matters by highlighting the importance of making wills and the lasting power of attorney (LPA).

We also sought to promote the mindset that early education on healthy living motivates people to lead an active lifestyle and cultivate good nutrition practices from an early age.

On an annual basis, SIWEC conducts health screening, talks and presentations to about 400 participants. Our outreach activities were largely curtailed in 2020 due to Covid-19 measures.

*Talk by SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit Singh at the Central Sikh Temple to update the community about the various SIWEC programmes and the financial position of the Council.*





## Health Education and Screening

SIWEC conducts regular health outreach through partner agencies or volunteer groups providing screenings and talks during major Gurburabs to create a greater health awareness and early detection environment. Such activities are done about 2-3 times per year, with about 400 people benefiting on an annual basis. The types of health screening that we have coordinated include general health check-up, cancer screening, eye check-up, and diabetes screening. SIWEC works with significant community partners such as the Health Promotion Board, National Kidney Foundation, Tsao Foundation and Thye Hwa Kuan Hospital. Sikh nurses and qualified volunteers often respond to help out when required.

## Diabetes and General Health Screening

In July 2015, a health screening session was organised by SIWEC in partnership with the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) at the Silat Road Sikh Temple. To create awareness for healthy living among the young, a mobile NKF van for kids was brought to the Gurdwara. Many children came after their Punjabi School lessons to experience and learn the basics of healthy eating and exercise through customised games on tablets. Some of the games showed the differences between healthy and junk food, highlighting how such food affects the kidneys negatively, besides suggesting ways to prevent such consequences through the engaging interactive games.



## Eye Check-Up

In mid-2017, 152 people from the Sangat at Silat Road accessed the eye-screening service provided by a team of three volunteer doctors assisted by volunteers and committee members from the Singapore Women's Association (SWA), a non-governmental and non-profit organisation. The SWA screening team established stations to check for visual acuity, eye pressure and to detect early signs of glaucoma as well as cataracts or other eye-related problems.





## Motivational Talks

Jagwinder Singh, a visiting para-cyclist from India, was in Singapore at the invitation of Ride to Serve 2018 organisers in March 2018. Whilst here, he met the primary and secondary school students at Punjabi School. The inspiration he provided the students in demonstrating his ability to use his feet to draw left them all moved, and spellbound.



| Teaching our children the value of resilience in the face of adversity.



## First Responder Training for Sikh Institutions

In June 2018, SIWEC organised two DARE (Dispatcher Assisted First Responder) workshops for members of Sikh institutions to learn and understand cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as well as to employ an automated external defibrillator (AED) in an emergency.



*200 participants were trained, including employees and volunteers from all Singapore Gurdwaras as well as volunteer leaders and members of our Sunehri Sahelian and Sunehray Pal groups during the sessions held at Silat Road Gurdwara and Central Sikh Gurdwara.*

## A Purple Parade Collaboration by SG Sikhs

About 30 Sikhs — ladies, gentlemen, children and even a baby — came together to attend the Purple Parade as the first ever Sikh community group there in August 2015. It was a collaborative effort between SIWEC, Singapore Punjabi Bikers, Young Sikh Association, and Singapore Sikh Sewaks.





## Sikh Community Sewa Week

### Outreach at Marine Parade to commemorate Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary in November 2019

About 100 students and adult volunteers from various Sikh community institutions — Singapore Sikh Education (SSEF), Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC), Sikh Sewaks Singapore and Young Sikh Association (YSA) — came together to undertake a community service activity to interact with families under the care of the Marine Parade Family Service Centre. This was one of the community's activities to commemorate Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary.

Mr Sarabjeet Singh, Chairman of Young Sikh Association (YSA), coordinators of the activity, said: "This Sewa Day initiative was conceived to enable Sikh youth to plan and conduct a service project in the community."

Ms Gaganjyot, an A-level student who was one of the volunteers, shared: "The house that I went to had a number of kids and they were living in a limited space. Although they did not have much, the kids were still very joyful. I was grateful for the opportunity to spend time with them."

SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma was especially proud of the student volunteers: "It is vital to inculcate the value of Sewa in our youth as it is one of the fundamental pillars of Sikhism as espoused by our founding Guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji."



Sikh community volunteers with Guest of Honour, Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin and SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma.



## Cross Cultural Engagements

SIWEC and its activities have become more visible to other benefactors and partners since we became a registered charity, being granted IPC status in 2009, and admitted as a full member of the National Council of Social Service in 2014. Such recognition and visibility has been a blessing as we have since benefited by receiving visits, invitations and donations from other faith and ethnicity-based institutions which mirror our belief in Sarbat da Bhalla (*Well-Being of all Humanity*).



### Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations

In November 2017, the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations (SFCCA) donated \$20,000 to the Sikh Welfare Council as part of their Alliance for Betterment of Community Day (ABC Day). The cheque was presented to SIWEC by then Minister for Education, Mr Ong Ye Kung.



### Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore and National Council of Churches in Singapore

As part of their SG50 Celebrations, the Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore (EFOS) and the National Council of Churches in Singapore (NCCS) celebrated their Jubilee Day of Prayer (JDOP) in December 2015 by donating \$50,000 each to 16 charities and religious organisations from the different ethnic groups. SIWEC was privileged to be one of the beneficiaries to receive a \$50,000 cheque presented by Mr Tan Chuan Jin, then Minister of Social & Family Development.



## Master Hsin Tao & Museum of World Religions

On Master Hsin Tao's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in October 2017, his foundation identified SIWEC as one of the seven organisations in Singapore to receive \$10,000 each.

Master Hsin Tao is internationally renowned for having established the Museum of World Religions (MWR) in Taipei, Taiwan — an initiative to promote world peace through mutual understanding and dialogue among religions. He is also the founding abbot of the Ling Jiou Mountain Wu Sheng Monastery, the Global Family for Love and Peace (GFLP), as well as the Maha Kusala Yama Monastery and its affiliated elementary school in Naung Mon, Myanmar.



On 12 June 2019, SIWEC hosted Master Hsin Tao and his entourage's visit to the SIWEC office and Central Sikh Temple (CST). He was briefed on SIWEC's programmes and key tenets of the Sikh faith by SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma. During his visit, Master Hsin Tao commended SIWEC for the vital work being done to support the disadvantaged

in Singapore through our programmes. He also remarked on the similarities between the Sikh and Buddhist faiths — where the five vices in Sikhism (lust, wrath, greed, attachment, pride) are somewhat akin to the five poisons (greed, aversion, ignorance, pride, and doubt).



## Recognition by Active Contributive Engaged Seniors (ACES)

Sikh Welfare Council was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by the Active Contributive Engaged Seniors (ACES) at the National Museum during the National Day celebrations in August 2018 in recognition of the contribution by our volunteers to the active ageing programmes in Singapore.



## Far East Organisation *Love Thy Neighbour Programme*

Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) facilitated for 62 Sikh Welfare Council beneficiaries to receive \$500 contribution each in early 2021 from Far East Organisation as part of their *Love Thy Neighbour Programme*; SIWEC Chairman, Mr Gurdip Singh Usma received the contributions on behalf of the SIWEC beneficiaries at the Fullerton Hotel from Guest of Honour, Dr Seetha Subbiah, President Girl Guides, Singapore.



## 23 March 2015

### The Sikh Community Joined Fellow Singaporeans to Pay Tribute to Our Founding Father Mr Lee Kuan Yew

The Singapore Sikh community group was led by Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio GRC, Mr Inderjit Singh, to express gratitude to the late first Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew, for “his emphasis on maintaining racial harmony, meritocracy and advocating minority rights.”

“He oversaw the establishment of the five non-Tamil Indian minority languages, including Punjabi, as recognised second languages in schools here,” Ang Mo Kio Member of Parliament Inderjit Singh said in a statement.

“That gave the community a huge boost as did the move of the Central Sikh Temple from its older and more worn-out premises in Queen Street to its current suburban location on Towner Road.”

Added the Young Sikh Association: “Despite being a minority within a minority, the Sikh community is an integral part of Singapore society simply because Mr Lee took great pains to ensure that all Singaporeans, regardless of race, language or religion, are equal partners in Singapore’s growth and success.”

All Gurdwaras in Singapore held prayer sessions in their respective premises to show gratitude to our founding father.

*Based on reports in Straits Times on 24 March 2015; Business Times on 25 March 2015; and SIWEC Insight, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2015.*

*Members of the Sikh community offer prayers and gratitude to the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the Ang Mo Kio tribute site.*





## Fund-Raising Activities

Fund-raising has been an integral part of the activities of the Sikh Welfare Council since its launch in 1995. The strong commitment and support of all the Sikh institutions in Singapore and the entire Sikh community have been the pillars underpinning SIWEC's success over the past 25 years.

The formal launch of the Sikh Welfare Council in October 1995 also marked the formal fund-raising for SIWEC, when \$1.7 million was raised from founding trustees, Sikh institutions and other well-wishers within and beyond the Sikh community.

All the Sikh institutions in Singapore (especially the Gurdwaras and Singapore Khalsa Association) have been fully supportive of SIWEC's fund-raising efforts. Beyond contributions during the launch, they provided the most constant source of funds over the last 25 years. SIWEC could not have thrived without the support of all Singapore Sikh institutions as their monthly contributions have constituted a key component of our regular funds. They have also made ad-hoc contributions to SIWEC during their Gurdwara Welfare Days and other major celebrations, by helping SIWEC conduct fund-raising campaigns for donations from their assembled sangat.

During the first decade, several community engagement and fund-raising initiatives such as charity dinners, community flag days, round-the-island overnight marathon runs and charity bike rides were initiated. Some of these events became annual focal points to rally the community behind the SIWEC flag and its mission, whilst helping to raise the organisation's presence and its profile.

SIWEC's fund-raising potential was significantly boosted after two major developmental milestones. In November 2009, after SIWEC was granted the Registered Charity and IPC Status, our donors stood to benefit from a 2.5 times income tax exemption.

In July 2014, after being admitted as a full member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), SIWEC could access more diverse sources of government funding, grants and schemes which only organisations with both IPC status and NCSS membership were eligible for.

The major fund-raising activities organised over the past 25 years are highlighted in the following pages.

## Sarbat da Bhalla Day & Racial Harmony Run

One of the most significant annual platforms was the series of Sarbat da Bhalla (*Well-Being of all Humanity*) runs initiated in 1999, in conjunction with the 300-year anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The event began as overnight relays between all Sikh Gurdwaras, serving to rally the community together behind one common cause, to support the well-being of those who were disadvantaged and vulnerable. What started as an intra-community initiative for the first 5 years or so eventually morphed into the Racial Harmony annual marathon relay runs with the participation of groups beyond the Sikh community, reflecting inclusion and societal cohesion. The last edition was called the Singapore Harmony Marathon 2010.

Some of the key factors that prompted SIWEC to embark on the initiative were:

- Raising funds to finance the ongoing activities and programmes of SIWEC.
- Promote, amongst the participants in particular and Sikh public in general, the value of Sarbat da Bhalla (*Well-Being of all Humanity*) which is the core guiding principle of SIWEC.
- Reinforce the spirit of psychological fortitude (Chardi Kala) and self-reliance.
- Raise the profile of SIWEC beyond the community i.e. the general public, with high-profile events of this nature.
- Promote religious and racial harmony and nurture fortitude among Singaporeans; and
- Involve Punjabi school students in a walkathon for younger children and their parents at the end-point.

The marathon run took the form of a relay around the island with participants drawn from different Sikh institutions, students and teachers from the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF), as well as Sikh members of the Singapore Armed Forces, Singapore Police Force and the Singapore Amateur Athletic Association (SAAA).

The island was divided into 15 sectors, with different Sikh institutions providing runners for each stretch. Each sector's representatives ran about 10 km before handing over the baton to the next sector representatives. Our Punjabi school students collected donations through sponsorship from their families and friends. The SSEF children were also briefed on the spirit of giving and sharing, and the caring aspects of Sikhism, as represented by Bhai Kahnaiyah's life and his values.

| Sarbat da Bhalla Marathon Route round Singapore.



## Inaugural Sarbat da Bhalla Run 1999

### Sarbat da Bhalla Day

Following the official launch of Vesakhi 99 on 20 March 1999, an overnight run was organised from Selegie Road to East Coast Park. It covered a distance of 150 km and encompassed all the Sikh temples. Participation by Sikh and non-Sikh institutions in the various legs of the run symbolised the solidarity along the different communities in Singapore. The run was followed by a walkathon by the Sikh community on 21 March 1999 at East Coast Park.

| All the runners set to take off at the starting point.



The Guest of Honour,  
Deputy Prime Minister BG Lee  
Hsien Loong, sounding the horn  
to start the overnight run.





### Sarbat da Bhalla Run 2000–2005

The early editions of the overnight marathon runs brought runners from one Gurdwara to the next. The community's response to the annual runs was overwhelming. Every Sikh institution participated and every Gurdwara was visited through the course of the overnight relay. The runs mostly commenced in the evening from the Central Sikh Temple or Sri Guru Singh Sabha and ended the following morning at Gurdwara Katong or the East Coast Parkway. The

exception was 2006, when the run ended at the Singapore Khalsa Association (SKA).

Over the years, Ministers and Members of Parliament invited to officiate as guest of honour to flag off and run the first or final legs of the marathon were impressed at the cohesion and self-help spirit of the Sikh community which they witnessed first-hand, and to learn that SIWEC operated a 24-hour community support hotline since its inception.



SIWEC Chairman Dr Sorinder Singh with Guest of Honour, Speaker of Parliament Abdullah Tarmugi.



MP Inderjit Singh with the key SIWEC organizers.



MP Davinder Singh joins Gurdwara Katong group.



Full support from SIWEC Patron, Mr Kartar Singh Thakral.





Flag off by MP Inderjit Singh together with Trustees Mr Kartar Singh Dalamnangal and Mr Naranjan Singh Brahmputra.



Getting ready... and go!



At Gurdwara Katong.



| At Yishun Sikh Temple.



| At Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan.



| At Silat Road Sikh Temple.



| At Khalsa Dharmak Sabha.



## Sarbat da Bhalla Run 2006

By the time SIWEC commemorated Sarbat da Bhalla Day in 2006, participation in the overnight run had expanded to include non-Sikh participants from the Bukit Timah and Kolam Ayer grassroots organisations, the Al-Falah Mosque, as well as running groups from Seletar, Bishan and the Red Hawk Sports Club. The event was officiated by the MP for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC and Mayor of Central CDC, Mr Zainudin Nordin.



Guest of Honour Mayor Zainudin of Central CDC flagged off the runners and carried the symbolic baton for the first leg from Sri Guru Singh Sabha at Sophia Road to Central Sikh Temple at Towner Road.



CST runners ran with members of Kolam Ayer grassroots until the East Coast Parkway where the Gurdwara Katong runners took over.



The runners ran the length of the East Coast Parkway through the night before heading northwards towards Yishun.

Gurdwara Yishun runners took over.





After covering the western parts of Singapore, the runners reached Silat Road at dawn. The final stretch took runners through the Central Business District.

Runners heading towards Gurdwara Katong, then to Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan before they made their way to the end-point at Singapore Khalsa Association .





The final group of runners from PKDD reached Singapore Khalsa Association by mid-morning, to a rousing welcome.







## Sarbat da Bhalla Run 2007

By 2007, participation in the overnight run which until then had been limited to the Sikh community, grew significantly with the support of the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and the People's Association (One People.sg movement), attracting participants representing the Inter-Racial Confidence Circles (IRCC) as well. It was soon transformed into an annual event with national significance as the Racial & Religious Harmony marathon covering more than 100 km across the island. Besides raising funds for SIWEC, the annual event brought together participants from grassroots organisations and people from different faiths in an overnight round-the-island relay with stops at faith centres (churches, mosques, Hindu and Chinese temples) representing the major religions to promote racial and religious harmony.



SIWEC Chairman, Dr Sorinder Singh welcoming Guest of Honour, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan.



Certificate of participation for all runners.





| The official runners all set for the run to start.



| Flag off by the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Isteri Satsang...



| ... with stops at a Hindu Temple...



| ... followed by a Chinese Temple ...



| ... and a mosque.





| The run continues all night.



| At Central Sikh Temple.



| At Silat Road Sikh Temple.



| At Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan.



| At Gurdwara Katong.





*A Bhangra welcome at Sri Guru Singh Sabha for the Guest of Honour, Minister of State (CYS) Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon.*

## **Singapore Harmony Marathon 2010**

The last overnight relay marathon organised in 2010 was called the Singapore Harmony Marathon. It was jointly organised by SIWEC and the Ministry for Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS). Minister of State (CYS) Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon was Guest of Honour at the event, with Mayor Zainuddin of Central CDC as special guest.

After meeting leaders and members of the community assembled at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Mrs Yu-Foo joined the community in a moment of silence to honour Mr Gurcharanjit Singh, who had suddenly passed away. He was a prominent grassroots leader in Bukit Timah GRC who had been keenly involved with SIWEC and had helped organise earlier editions of the Harmony Run.



*Community leaders join Guest of Honour, Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon to observe a minute of silence for the late Gurcharanjit Singh.*



*Guest of Honour, Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon given a tour of Sri Guru Singh Sabha and briefed about SIWEC's progress and earlier fund-raising activities.*

Chairman of the Organising Committee, Mr Gurdip Singh Usma briefed Mrs Yu-Foo on SIWEC's programmes and earlier fund-raising activities. Mrs Yu-Foo then presented certificates of participation to team leaders for the marathon relay run. By 2010, a diverse set of community groups from across Singapore including grassroots organisations and running groups such as the Seletar Hash House Harriers and Red Hawk Sports Club participated in the cross-island overnight runs.



*Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon presented certificates of participation to team leaders.*





The flag-off at dusk from Sri Guru Singh Sabha on Wilkie Road.



Runners included toddlers in arms, youths, as well as gallant seniors!



Seniors, middle-aged adults and youth of both genders and different ethnic groups took turns as flag-bearers to keep the national flag as well as the SIWEC and IRCC flags all flying high throughout the run.



The relay 'baton' was shaped in the form of a khanda (a double-edged sword), one of the three weapons in the Sikh coat of arms.





| Yishun runners ready to roll.



| All set to go from Silat Road Sikh Temple.



| Runners along the Helix bridge near the Marina Bay waterfront.



| Runners along Nicoll Highway.



| MP Fatimah Lateef (MP Marine Parade GRC) joined a group of inter-ethnic runners from Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan (PKDD) to run with them to Gurdwara Katong, the end-point for the marathon relay.





*The national flag, as well as the SIWEC and IRCC flags, and the Khanda-adorned baton, which had been carried and handed over across the island, were proudly carried all the way to the end-point!*



*SIWEC Chairman Mr JJ Sekhon and Mr Gurdip Singh Usma joined MP Fatimah Lateef and the runners for a final hurrah! Family members from various ethnic communities had gathered at Gurdwara Katong to welcome all the runners home. It was a celebration of cohesion in true Singaporean style!*



*After 2010, the focus shifted to alternative platforms including charity cycling for fund-raising and community engagement, with an emphasis to capitalise on matching grants available, after SIWEC became a full member of NCSS.*



## Flag Days

Seven flag days were held between 2004 and 2013, raising over \$300,000 in total. This was done through the coordinated efforts of all Gurdwaras, Singapore Khalsa Association, Young Sikh Association, Khalsa Kindergarten and most significantly, the over 700 teachers and student volunteers from the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF) Punjabi Language Centres. We are also thankful to the students and staff from various secondary schools who extended great support for our flag days over the years.

Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada recalls, “I worked on the annual flag days which were organised under the leadership of Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada as Chairman of the Organising Committee and Dr Sorinder Singh as Vice-Chairman. Our Gurdwaras provided langgar and manned many of the Flag-Day Coordinating Points.”



*Students from local primary and secondary schools spread out across downtown Singapore and the heartlands to raise funds.*



Collection Counting — SIWEC Treasurer Mr Gurmit Singh Grewal is delighted to learn that a kind soul donated a \$1,000 bill!



SIWEC welfare officer Mr Sanjiv Singh assisting to account for and verify all donations received.



## RECENT ACTIVITIES

### Flag Day

When: June 19, 7am – 9pm

Where: Island-wide



More than 700 volunteers took part in this highly successful island-wide Flag Day event. Volunteers were recruited from various institutions as well as via word of mouth, social media (Facebook), etc.



We are pleased to report that \$55,753.55 was collected in the form of donations for the event. With an operational cost of \$3,274.44, \$52,326 was raised for SIWEC. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all volunteers for their invaluable help and contribution.

## Flag Day

Sikh Welfare Council was allotted a Flag Day on Saturday, 20 August 2011 by the National Council of Social Services. This year we saw an increase in total participation with over 760 volunteers going island wide and conducting the collection. We had more volunteers from outside the Sikh Community and this is an encouraging development. Donations collected: \$50,835.

**Extract from SIWEC Insight Newsletter, 2011**



## President S R Nathan Autographed Book Presentation

In 2011, Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon secured former President S R Nathan's support to autograph 17 copies of his book *Winning against the Odds*, for donations of \$10,000 each. President Nathan graciously hosted the donors and Sikh community leaders at the Istana for the book presentation. The total amount raised for SIWEC was \$170,000.



President S R Nathan presented autographed copies of his book "Winning Against The Odds" to 17 members of the Sikh community at the Istana on 18 April 2011. They had bought a copy of the book for \$10,000 each. The initiative raised \$170,000 to support SIWEC's work in aid of its beneficiaries.





## Welfare Days at Gurdwaras and Other Sikh Institutions

SIWEC's outreach at Gurdwaras has been a priority in our outreach within the community. Our team visits each gurdwara, to keep the sangat updated on SIWEC's activities, engaging in story-telling to highlight our impact and challenges over the years while sharing candidly our financial position.

We took the opportunity to raise funds, distribute Giro forms to raise funds by urging monthly donations, thereby providing the community the opportunity to assist families and individuals in need through SIWEC's assistance and support. Such outreach helps raise visibility, awareness, and support for SIWEC's work.

### Silat Road Gurdwara



Mr Ranjit Vahan at Silat Road Gurdwara Welfare Day outreach with SIWEC management committee member Mdm Sarjit Kaur.

### Singapore Khalsa Association



SIWEC's booths at Vesakhi Mela in 2011 (left picture) and 2022 (right picture). Chairman Jagjit Singh Sekhon presented a token of appreciation to Diabetes Society of Singapore for partnering SIWEC to offer community health screening at Vesakhi Mela 2022.

Every contribution adds to our income which helps to sustain our operations.

In particular, Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon used his links with various Sikh institutions to sustain and enhance support for SIWEC's programmes; especially using these Gurdwara Welfare Days.

Health screening activities were also promoted at annual events like Vesakhi Mela at the Singapore Khalsa Association and Gurburab celebrations at all Gurdwaras. SIWEC's visible presence at these events presented the opportunity to approach members of the community to sign up as regular Giro donors, thereby enabling their fulfilment of one's Dasvand (commitment to helping others, by donating to a charitable cause). These outreach activities continue to be held regularly at the Gurdwaras and Sikh institutions to sustain engagement with the Sikh community.

### Central Sikh Temple



2013 — SIWEC Manager Ranjit Singh Wahla with Ms Karam Kaur (who replaced Ms Indrejit as Welfare Officer) with volunteers at Gurdwara Welfare Day outreach at Central Sikh Temple.



### **Gurdwara Katong**



| Outreach to promote monthly Giro donations for SIWEC and health screening at Gurdwara Katong.



### **Gurdwara Sahib Yishun**



| Outreach activities at the Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.



### **Fund-Raising by Central Sikh Temple Istri Satsang and Singapore Khalsa Association Ladies Wing**

The Sikh ladies in the community have also been tremendously supportive of the activities of SIWEC and stepped forward both in cash by raising funds and making donations to SIWEC and in kind by holding fund-raising events, doing Sewa and serving as volunteers in

SIWEC activities. The Sikh ladies within the community also form the pillar of the Senior Citizen activities conducted by SIWEC as highlighted in the ***Our Welfare Programmes*** section of this publication.





### ***CST Istri Satsang Sabha Contributions***

*SIWEC receiving a donation for \$5,000 from Mdm Jagir Kaur, President of CST Istri Satsang in 2017.*

### ***Singapore Khalsa Association Ladies Wing Fund Raising for SIWEC***



*MP Inderjit Singh flagged off the fund-raising walk by SKA Ladies Wing members in conjunction with International Women's Day 2010, before joining the ladies, including his spouse Mrs Manjit Kaur, who joined the walk as well.*



*Mrs Inderjit Singh with SKA Ladies Wing Chairperson, Ms Kirpal Kaur, presenting a cheque for \$22,000 to SIWEC Chairman Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon in March 2010.*



*MP for Tanjong Pagar Ms Indranee Rajah with SKA Ladies Wing President Kirpal Kaur, presenting a cheque for \$5,000 to SIWEC Vice-Chairperson Mdm Gurmit Sroya, at the Charity Dinner organised in 2012.*



## Charity Dinners & Fashion Shows

The SIWEC fund-raising team also held various charity lunches and dinners to raise funds for SIWEC. The response at these functions and the generous bidding for items to raise funds for charity was very heartening. Our special thanks go to all the participants, donors, bidders and volunteers who helped make these events a resounding success. In 2011 alone, there were three such events, two of which were largely volunteer-driven and organised.

### Evening By The Sea – Charity Dinner & Dance

The Charity Dinner & Dance event was held on 9 April 2011 at Gurame Restaurant Changi Coast Walk. The event was attended by more than 300 guests who helped in the good cause to raise about \$12,000 for SIWEC.



April 2011 — SIWEC Chairman Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon received a cheque for \$11,500 from the organising team of **A Nite of Food and Fun to Remember – Sharing and Caring for the Needy.**



Glimpses of our organisers and participants at the **A Nite of Food and Fun to Remember – Sharing and Caring for the Needy.**





*Models at the charity fashion show luncheon showcasing beautifully designed outfits.*



### Charity Lunch

The Sikh Welfare Council held a fund-raising charity fashion show luncheon 'Aa Dekhen Zaraa' ("Come, Let's See") on 24 July 2010 at the Yantra Restaurant (Tanglin Mall) to raise funds for its programmes. Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio GRC, Mr Inderjit Singh, was the Guest of Honour. Auctions were held to raise funds and the guests participated actively, all in the name of charity. The charity lunch helped to raise about \$15,000.

*MP Inderjit Singh presenting a cheque to SIWEC at the fund-raising event.*



## Charity Hi-Tea and Fashion Show

The Sikh Welfare Council held a fund-raising event on 14 August 2011 at Shangri-La. The high tea event was titled “Aa Phir Dekhen Zaraa” (Come Let’s See, Once Again) and raised \$25,000.

Around 350 guests attended the event and participated whole-heartedly in an auction following the show which included music, dance and a fashion and jewellery show by Pure Earth and the Jewel Box. Member of Parliament for Holland–Bukit Timah GRC, Ms Sim Ann, was the Guest of Honour.



August 2011 — Guest of Honour Member of Parliament Sim Ann, presenting a cheque for \$20,000 to SIWEC Chairman Jagjit Singh Sekhon. Management Committee member Mr Dinesh Singh (left) had spearheaded the planning and coordination for the fashion show cum high tea event Aa Phir Dekhen Zaraa.



Fashion and jewellery show by Pure Earth and the Jewel Box.



## Cycling for Charity

Cycling to raise funds for the Sikh Welfare Council started in 2001 when the first Ipoh to Singapore cycling event was held, followed by another Malacca to Singapore event in 2008. Since 2014, cycling for charity in various forms has become the mainstay of fund-raising for SIWEC. The various events and their highlights are discussed below.

*“For every charity cycle ride since the first one in 2001, Mr Manjit Sevea, founding member of Bike Aid, has constantly lent his support, guidance and expertise; rallying his network of fellow cyclists to help raise funds, besides advising on route safety, insurance, accommodation, ride-logistics and conditioning of riders for the gruelling final ride. His role as catalyst and advisor has been the most significant factor inspiring many volunteers like Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa, Mr Luvinderpal (Paul) Singh, Mr Diljit Singh, and many others who stepped forward to sustain the admirable legacy of fund-raising and community-building through cycling.”*

— SIWEC Vice-Chairman (Ops) Manmohan Singh

## Ipoh to Singapore Fund-Raising Cycling Ride 2001

In 2001, Mr Manjit Singh Sevea, a founding member of Bike Aid Singapore, led a group of 30 cyclists who came together to help raise \$60,000 for SIWEC. The group rode about 500 km from Ipoh, with stops at Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, Batu Pahat and Johor Bahru, before returning to Singapore. The historic fund-raising charity ride in support of SIWEC blazed the trail and inspired future volunteer-led charity rides over the next two decades.

Mr Manjit recalls, “On the whole, it was not a difficult ride but it was great fun. Besides the thrills and the self-satisfaction of having participated, it was great to feel welcomed by enthusiastic Sikh sangat at every stop in Malaysia. The crowds were not only at the Gurdwara in Ipoh where we started, but also in Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, Batu Pahat and Johor Bahru. Our encounters with the locals were also most heart-warming when even the poor kampong folks offered refreshments to us during our stops.”



Mr Manjit Singh Sevea, catalyst of cycling to fund-raise for charity.



Cycling to fund-raise for charity.

## Malacca to Singapore Fund-Raising Cycling Ride 2008

In 2008, a second ride, this time from Malacca to Singapore, was organised from 12 to 13 April 2008. More than 30 riders rode from Malacca via Batu Pahat where they had an overnight stop. They arrived back in Singapore on the afternoon of Sunday, 13 April, to a rousing welcome by the Sikh community gathered at Sri Guru Singh Sabha to celebrate Vesakhi. The event raised \$23,000 for SIWEC. Joining the Sikh community to receive the returning riders at Sri Guru Singh Sabha were Guest of Honour, Member of Parliament (MP) Baey Yam Keng and Special Guest, MP Inderjit Singh.

The returning riders received a raucous dhol and bhangra welcome with a standing ovation from the assembled sangat (community) as they made their way to the stage.



Guest of Honour Mr Baey Yam Keng with (from left to right) MP Inderjit Singh, ride organiser Mr Manjit Singh Sevea, and Chairman, Sikh Advisory Board, Mr Bhajan Singh Suropada.



Cyclists stopped at Johor Bahru Gurdwara on the return journey to Singapore.



Riders arriving at Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Mt Emily Park, to join the community's Vesakhi celebrations.



Mr Michael Koh, the 70-year-old who rides with SIWEC every time.



Mr Baey presented certificates of participation to all riders.







All riders were garlanded on stage by senior members of the sangat before Mr Baey presented each participant with a certificate of achievement and posed for a group photo.



Jubilant riders celebrating their achievement. We made it!



Guest of Honour Mr Baey Yam Keng and MP Inderjit, with riders, organisers, and community well-wishers.



## Ride for Charity (RfC)

Ride for Charity (RfC) was conceptualised as a platform that brought sports and charity together. The Ride for Charity cycling events were organised in support and collaboration with SIWEC. RfC, an initiative of the Harmony on Wheels movement, was formed by Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa as an inclusive group supporting charitable causes and seeking to impact society positively. He was assisted by Mr Manjit Singh Sevea providing technical advice and expertise on ride organisation, safety, and logistics.

A series of rides were organised in 2014, 2016 and 2018 to raise funds for SIWEC initially. In the later two rides, a portion of the funds raised went to Sunlove Abode for the Intellectually Infirm. The funds collected from RfC events for SIWEC were spent on education, a leveller to uplift the unfortunate who needed assistance. SIWEC started the Academic Excellence Programme (AEP) to help our children with difficulties in academic performance in school.

The programme identified children who were underperforming, prioritising their needs and provided relevant resources to help them reach their full potential. SIWEC also launched a financial assistance programme for children from needy families at the Punjabi centres. This included assistance for school fees, books and uniforms.

SIWEC was privileged to work with Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa and the Harmony on Wheels (HoW) Organising Committee which included Mr Manjit Singh Sevea, for raising funds for SIWEC to support the implementation of new initiatives. We are grateful to Harmony on Wheels for adopting the noble cause of raising funds to help uplift children from disadvantaged families.



Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa steered the organisation of the Ride for Charity series.



A formidable pair of effective volunteer leaders — Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa (right) and Mr Manjit Singh Sevea (left).

## Harmony on Wheels – Ride for Charity 2014

Malacca • Singapore

28–30 November 2014

The first Ride for Charity (RfC) cycling event was held from 28–30 November 2014 with over 50 participants cycling from Malacca back to Singapore covering 270 km, and raising over \$210,000 for SIWEC in the process.

The journey began earlier in 2014, with a series of outreach efforts across community touchpoints to generate interest among new riders to join the core group to train and complete the full distance together.



| A group ride to celebrate National Day.



| Training ride at the East Coast Parkway.

At sunrise on 29 November, after morning Ardas seeking blessings for a safe ride for the two days ahead, over 50 riders pedalled from Malacca Gurdwara to Batu Pahat.



| Riders all set to roll from the starting point at Malacca Gurdwara.



| Ardas at Malacca Gurdwara before flag off.



## Day 2 — Leaving Batu Pahat, with one mission, to arrive in Singapore by dusk



*The final stretch after crossing the Causeway, heading to Central Sikh Temple along Woodlands & Upper Bukit Timah Road.*



*What a tremendous welcome! Riders were greeted by the thunderous beat of the dhol, cheers from the expectant crowd, and jaikaaras upon arrival at the Central Sikh Temple at Towner Road.*





*Mission accomplished!  
Event organiser Manjit Randhawa with fellow cyclists.*



*Thanksgiving prayers, congratulatory speeches and hugs all round as riders reunite with family members.*



## Ride for Charity 2014 Celebration Dinner and Cheque Presentation

At the celebration dinner, Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa shared the goals of the Harmony on Wheels movement and Chairman SIWEC Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan conveyed his congratulations and deep appreciation to the organising committee led by Mr Manjit and thanked all donors, well-wishers, riders and support crew, who had together made Ride for Charity 2014 a resounding success.



| Mr Manjit Singh Randhawa sharing about Harmony on Wheels.



| SIWEC Chairman Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan, applauds the fund-raising effort.



Members of the RfC 2014 Organising Committee led by Mr Manjit Randhawa including riders and well-wishers presented the cheque to SIWEC Chairman Mr Amarjit S Wasan, Treasurer Mr Inderpal Singh and CSGB representatives Mr Karpal S Melhi and Mr Dilbagh Singh.



All participants — riders, support crew and well-wishers received an achievement certificate, in appreciation for the tremendous effort to ensure the success of the event.



Support crew and life-partners Mr Rajesh Gill and Ms Karam Kaur thanked by Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan.



Riders Mr Alex Lee, Ms Virginia Tang and Ms Margaret Oh received their achievement certificates from Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan.



Inter-generational family participants — Inderpal, Manpreet, Samitri, Jagdis and Gurjeevan.



## Harmony on Wheels – Ride for Charity 2015 Singapore • Malacca • Singapore 12–15 March 2016

The second Ride for Charity event was organised as part of a collaboration between Harmony on Wheels, Sikh Welfare Council, Central Sikh Gurdwara Board and Sunlove Abode for the Intellectually Infirm. The latter charity was selected as the second beneficiary by the organisers.

The 2015 Ride for Charity event was initially scheduled for November 2015. However, the event was postponed to March 2016 after the regional haze had affected Singapore, Malaysia and many parts of Southeast Asia for a few months in 2015.



Sixty-five cyclists had trained hard in Singapore, only to be compelled to cease training when the hazy conditions became a health hazard, causing the cessation of all outdoor activities. Training eventually resumed in December 2015 and by early March 2016, the riders were all just raring to go!



*Riders set off at daybreak from Johor Bahru on Day 1 of the 4-day ride.*



*Event marshals guiding riders into the brunch rest stop on the road to Malacca.*



***Dawn on Day 4** — Jubilant riders and safety marshals in high spirits for the return journey.*



*Our fit and formidable lady riders thrilled to ride the full distance.*

## Day 4 — Along the route from Batu Pahat to Pekan Nenas



Lunch stop at Pekan Nenas – before riding into Johor Bahru town.

From Pekan Nenas to Johor Bahru.





*Regrouping at Marsiling after crossing the Causeway.*



*Riding along Hillview flyover heading to the end-point.*



*An expectant crowd had gathered at Central Sikh Temple to welcome all RfC 2015 participants.*







| Riders led by a dhol troupe and support car along Towner Road to the Central Sikh Temple.



| After 4 days riding 540 km, riders were thrilled at the tremendous welcome.





*Cheered by well-wishers and family members including participants' spouses, parents, children and siblings; it was an emotional homecoming reunion!*



*Finally reunited with loved ones!*





| *Thanksgiving prayers for the safe return of all participants.*

On 28 May 2016, Harmony on Wheels (HOW) hosted the post-ride appreciation dinner for the riders, support crew, sponsors and well-wishers who had been instrumental in the success of the ride which helped raise \$203,000 for SIWEC and \$51,000 for Sunlove Abode-Home for The Intellectually Infirm.



| *Members of the organising committee presented the cheque to SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma, who thanked everyone for the tremendous effort to press on to train after the enforced break compelled by the 2015 haze, and their unflinching dedication to raising funds for a worthy cause.*



| *HOW founder Mr Manjit Randhawa and Chief Safety and Logistics Mr Melvinder Singh presented a cheque for \$50,000 to Mr Wee Lin and Mr Raja Mohan of Sunlove.*



## Harmony on Wheels – Ride for Charity 2018 Singapore • Malacca • Singapore 23–26 March 2018

The third edition of Ride for Charity from Singapore to Malacca and back covering 500 km was staged from 23 to 26 March 2018.

The ride raised \$137,000 with \$96,000 for SIWEC and \$41,000 for Sunlove Abode — Home for The Intellectually Infirm. The funds raised were in support of SIWEC's Academic Excellence Programme, a collaborative effort with the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF).



| Day 1 — Riders set to roll out from Johor Bahru to Batu Pahat.



| Day 3 — Riders all set for flag-off to Batu Pahat on the return leg.







| Day 4 — 26 March: Riders and event marshals all primed for the ride home!



| Members of the Organising Committee presented cheques to SIWEC and to Sunlove Abode.



Thirty-two cyclists and 15 crew members ended their journey on Sunday, 26 March at Sri Guru Singh Sabha and were met with a rousing welcome as sounds of the dhol and loud cheers filled the air. Sri Guru Singh Sabha President, Mr Tirlok Singh Kler, together with committee members and the assembled sangat had turned out in full force to support the charity ride's completion, as part of Singh Sabha's centennial celebrations.



There were more than a few teary eyes as everyone shook hands and hugged after completing a seemingly formidable, more than 500 km ride. Over 4 days, 32 riders focused on one mission!

SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma said, "The spirit of the riders in embarking on this challenge is indeed remarkable. I am especially grateful to the organisers and well-wishers for their support of this initiative, and for adopting SIWEC as one of the beneficiary organisations."



Ride organisers Manjit Singh Randhawa (extreme left) and (Paul) Luvinderpal Singh (extreme right) with fellow riders and their proud wives, at the ride end-point at Sri Guru Singh Sabha.



Jubilant participants at the endpoint — Sri Guru Singh Sabha.





## Ride to Serve 2019

### Ride to Serve 2019 Singapore • Malacca • Singapore 16–17 March 2019

The subsequent charity ride in 2019 was named **Ride to Serve**, a fresh initiative spearheaded by Mr Luvinderpal Singh. Thirty-four riders and 25 event marshals participated in the first edition of Ride to Serve held on 16 and 17 March 2019. The ride from Malacca to Singapore helped to raise \$282,000 for SIWEC.

“We planned the ride as an inclusive activity to strengthen bonds, stay healthy and serve a good cause. We had riders from all age groups, including four who were 70-77 years young!” said Mr Paul (Luvinderpal) Singh, chief organiser for the ride.



| Riders, support crew and well-wishers all set for the flag off at Malacca Gurdwara, after Ardas for a safe ride.



Ride to Serve 2019 was Ms Priyanka Chandna's first time as a long-distance cyclist — yet she completed the entire 270 km from Malacca to Singapore. "I had never ridden more than 70 km prior to March 2019. I managed it thanks to distance training with my husband Dheeraj. He had inspired me to join him to ride for charity and help others in need. All our training was done at night," she said.

Mr Gurdev Singh, who had organised most of the training sessions in Singapore reflected, "We were so thrilled to have a guest rider, Jagwinder Singh from Punjab, India, riding with us. Born without full arms, he rode with great speed, spirit and stamina, impressing fellow riders who were mostly in awe of his fitness and grit."



| Fellow riders at a rest stop en route.

| Gurdev & Jagwinder arriving at Batu Pahat.

| Sharing during group dinner.

"Jagwinder overcame the odds to learn and eventually master cycling whilst developing the ability to cook, paint, and draw with his feet. His aspiration is to continue to motivate and inspire people while training hard to win a gold for India in the Paralympics one day," Mr Gurdev added.



## Ride2Serve 2020

**Virtual Ride: 1 October – 30 November 2020**

**Road Ride: 13 December 2020**

### Ride2Serve 2020 raised a total sum of \$350,000 for SIWEC

Ride2Serve (R2S) 2020 was initially planned as a 370km cycling ride from Port Dickson to Singapore. It was organised to raise funds for SIWEC, inculcate fitness and deepen friendships amongst a group of like-minded cyclists. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ride scheduled for mid-March had to be called off.

Much to our riders' joy in late 2020, the organisers got creative after circuit-breaker measures were gradually relaxed. They devised a hybrid fund-raising campaign harnessing digital and online channels in late 2020, blending a virtual ride with a physical road-ride. The two-part campaign was launched virtually through November, where cyclists were given 30 days to complete a 300 km challenge using the Strava platform to record individual distances clocked at home whilst cheering and challenging each other in true sporting spirit.

On Sunday, 13 December morning, 60 riders and 23 event marshals participated in the physical road-ride along central-southern and western parts of Singapore, clocking distances of nearly 100 km each.

Instead of riding in packs of 10 or 12 riders as had been the norm in pre-Covid times, R2S cyclists rode in smaller groups of 4 to 5, keeping to prevailing social-distancing measures for cyclists.



*The Central Sikh Temple, where SIWEC is based, fittingly served as the start and endpoint for the road-ride.*





Lead organiser Paul Luvinderpal Singh and group being flagged off by SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma.



Observing social distancing regulations, our R2S cyclists rode in small groups.



A volunteer-organised photobooth (with photo-paper sponsored by Canon Singapore) was organised for all riders to leave with a keepsake photo with SIWEC Chairman, Mr Gurdip Singh Usma.

R2S is proudly an inclusive event regardless of age, gender, race, or ability.

Organiser Paul (Luvinderpal) Singh said, “I’m especially grateful for the tremendous fund-raising effort by all riders, event-marshals and well-wishers who donated to our fund-raising challenge. This year, our team worked with SIWEC to use more digital channels harnessing QR codes and platforms such as GIVEasia and Giving.sg to enable more convenient ways to donate beyond the traditional methods. Our efforts paid off as we managed to raise a total of \$250,000, excluding the \$100,000 matching grant from the Tote Board.



Stalwart R2S cyclist Bikar Singh proudly wearing his ride-completion medal presented by SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma at the endpoint in the basement carpark at Central Sikh Temple.



**DONATE NOW**

<https://give.asia/ride2serve2020>



## Event Marshals make rides happen

**A community of dedicated volunteers that grew into an extended family enabled the efficient organization of each fund-raising cycle ride.**

**How did all these volunteers make things happen?**



Mr Manjit Randhawa and his wife Raspal (with their daughter Seetal and son Prem), successfully rallied a community of volunteers, to organize the Ride for Charity series of rides between 2014 and 2018 under the Harmony on Wheels (HOW) movement. Gursharan (seated far left) was a key member of the organising team.

## First Recce at Pekan Nenas

Logistics and safety chief for Ride for Charity 2014, 2015 and 2018 Melvinder led a group of event safety marshals on a route recce to Pekan Nenas in early 2014.



Clockwise from left to right clockwise:  
Inderpal, Manmohan, Melvinder, Mohan, Seetal, Raspal,  
Gursharan, Dr Ramnik, Sharanjit, Harpreet and Etasha.



Our formidable medical team in 2014 and 2015 — Mr Hardial Singh and Mdm Sarjit Kaur.







Left: Simran, event photographer in 2014, 15 and 18, with Gursharan and Manpreet (nurse).  
Right: Sharanjit with her daughter Etasha and Dr Ramnik Ahuja, supporting since 2014.



SIWEC Chairman Mr Amarjit Wasan and Mr Alagiry engaging riders Mr Diljit Singh (right) and Mr Archie Ong (left).



Family bonding — Raspal and Seetal with Ammrita.



Inderpal (left) with Bhupinder in 2014, with bananas and ice-cold water for riders.



Support for RfC 2014 included senior well-wishers who helped raise funds and travelled to Malacca to support riders in unique ways.



Left: Mrs Sarjit Khosa (centre) with Mr Dilbagh Singh & Ms Joginder Kaur.  
Right: Mr Manjit Randhawa with Mr Dilbagh Singh, SIWEC manager Ranjit Singh with Dr Jaswant Singh of Sikh Centre.





*At the post event appreciation dinner, Mr Amarjit Wasan thanked Mr Charanjit Singh Sahni, our stalwart volunteer and safety marshal since 2014.*



*Deep appreciation for Mr Shoeb Burhanuddin, who with his wife Shireen, have both supported our rides since 2014.*

Riders wanted a challenge after the one-way Malacca to Singapore ride in 2014. Organisers planned for a two-way ride over 4 days, which required additional logistics and safety considerations.



*Safety and logistics chief Melvinder conducting a pre-ride briefing to participants.*



*Briefing for event marshals on route safety and logistics coordination.*



*Experienced event marshals like Prem & Kumar were part of the safety team assisting Melvinder, with expert guidance from Mr Manjit Sevea, the catalyst behind cycling for charity in the community.*



*Dr Ramnik together with her husband Mr Pawanpreet Singh (right), have supported every charity fund-raising ride since 2014. Dr Ramnik provided medical support while Pawanpreet cycled to fund-raise. Their teenage son Hargun rode with his father during RfC 2015.*



*Husband and wife team Karam and Rajesh during RfC 2015.*



*Spraying riders with ice-cold water, providing safety cover and event photography are all in a day's work for chief Mel with his core team — Dr Ramnik, Simran and Tina, his better half.*







Close coordination in planning and harmony between ride-leaders and event safety marshals ensured the safe conduct of every charity cycle ride in aid of SIWEC between 2014 and 2020.



Event marshals' duties include hoisting faulty bikes onto safety cars, coordinating the ambulance's movements, and directing the support bus to replenish safety car supplies, and pick-up injured or spent riders.

Event marshals multi-task, they can morph into event organisers and entertainers as well!



In their event-marshall work clothes during RfC 2015.

Left picture: (from left clockwise) Seetal, Gursharan, Anupreet, Jagjote, Amrita and Raspal.  
Right picture: Gursharan (sitting) and Karam (squatting) in front, with (standing from left to right clockwise) Etasha, Raspal, Tina, Anupreet, Bhajan, Param Preet, Ananta, and Simran.

Our multi-talented ladies all glammed up (above) in their party outfits to celebrate the RfC 2015 appreciation dinner which they helped to organize and host as well!  
From left to right: Simran, Gursharan, Raspal, Seetal, Prisha, Sharanjit, Etasha and Tina.



Event marshals host and entertain — Amrita (left) as emcee introducing Rajesh and Simran who sang a duet at the appreciation dinner.



Sharanjit co-emceed the RfC 2015 Gala Nite with rider Simer at the event held in June 2016.



Harmony on Wheels founder Manjit (left) with SIWEC Manager Ranjit (right) and his brother Manjit (centre) who both served as event marshals for RfC 2015 and 2018.



Age and status are no barrier to doing Sewa in support of a worthy cause.  
Left: Mr Amarjit S with Mr Harbans S at the flag-off for RfC 2018.  
Right: Rajesh partnered Harbans in a safety car.



Event marshals guided riders all the way up north to Malacca and through the return ride home!



Evening safety meetings and rest-stop coordination to ensure a safe and energized ride for all.







Regular rider Balbir joined Prem our seasoned lead support car driver as navigator during RfC 2018, with SIWEC welfare officer Jaspreet providing medical cover.



Seetal assisting rider Sharon with ice and water.

## Inspiring the next generation

Paul (Luvinderpal) Singh, rider since 2014 and lead organizer of Ride to Serve 2019 and 2020, with his teenaged daughters Etasha and Prisha, who rode as navigators in support cars over the years.



Etasha supported RfC 2015, while Prisha joined her mum during R2S 2019.



Event marshals briefing led by Avtar.



Avtar who rode in 2014 (left picture), took on the role of chief of safety and logistics for R2S 2019 & 2020. Assisting him were Manmohan (left) and Ramesh (middle) who cycled in 2014, 2015 and 2018, while supporting R2S 2019 as event photographer.



Amarjit and Jarnail, supporters since 2014, volunteered as safety marshals in 2018–2020.



*Ride to Serve 2019 bus captain Vasanthan helped coordinate movement of the support bus. Pictured here with upcoming next generation leaders Jeet, Belisha and Gehna who all assisted from the support bus and cars, cheering our riders all the way!*



*Stalwart SIWEC supporter Mr Rajbir S Thakral's son Hardev and wife Amritpreet both volunteered as event marshals in 2018, to provide safety cover for riders.*

### Kudos to event marshals, from grateful riders

A truly family affair — SIWEC Vice-Chairman (Ops) Manmohan Singh, who helped coordinate logistics and safety since 2014, noted: “It was really heart-warming to see the growing number of families participating each time. In 2019, Avtar helped with overseeing logistics and safety while his wife Simha rode. Paul’s wife Sharanjit drove a safety car with their daughter Prisha navigating, with her youngest daughter, Bellisha, assisting Avtar’s childhood friend and buddy Vasanthan, in the support bus. Dheeraj

accompanied his wife Priyanka to ride the full distance while their daughter Gehna cheered them both from the support bus. Rajbir rode to raise funds while his wife Amritpreet and their son Hardev gallantly provided safety cover for one rider group. Two other safety cars comprised a father and son pair — Darshan and Sukhwinder, as well as a young mother (Inderpal) with her teenage children Arjan and Jeet. The event provided an opportunity for each family to bond in uniquely different and special ways!”

*We are truly grateful for the event marshals who ensured we had a safe ride. They kept us well-hydrated and motivated all the way,”*

*— Mr Sapuran Singh*



*Safety marshals in peach tee-shirt with riders (in yellow) at the final regrouping point before the Causeway. Right to left: Gurcharan, Arjan, Baldev, Inderpal, Sharanjit, Prisha, with a group of riders including Paul (making the “V” sign with sunglasses and white helmet) and Simha (in red, third from left).*





*Inderpal with her daughter Jeet (standing), with Prisha and Belisha (seated in car).*



*Sukhwinder with his Dad Darshan.*

After Ride to Serve 2020 (R2S) was postponed from March due to the pandemic, a virtual ride was staged in October, and the idea of a physical ride was revived only after the pandemic circuit-breaker measures were relaxed in November.

Avtar formulated and directed route safety and logistics plans for a safe-distanced ride, commencing and ending at the Central Sikh Temple (CST). The final ride-safety briefing was conducted via Zoom, which had become the default mode for meetings in pandemic times.



*Avtar was assisted by a group of event marshals including (from left to right) — Amritpal, Sukhbir, Amarjit, Vasanthan and Jarnail. 3 among them — Amritpal, Amarjit and Jarnail — had participated as riders in past charity cycle rides.*



*Lead Organiser Paul Singh showing off his copy of the post-ride group photo taken at the Canon photo-booth organized by Geoffrey Pereira, a member of the working committee, who volunteered to organize the photo-booth and coordinate with Canon for high-quality photo paper.*

*Melvinder, our chief of safety and logistics between 2014-2018, got the opportunity to finally enjoy riding again, without too much concern for logistics and coordination of event marshals or logistics to support the riders!*



*Other marshals included Sharanjit with her daughters Etasha, Belisha, Prisha and Dr Ramnik, seen here after the ride.*



*Returning riders were greeted by cheering and applause led by staff from SIWEC including Jaspreet, Mdm Kartar, Sarafeen and Nelvinder, supported by SIWEC Manager Ranjit and Baldev as well.*

## Our Cycling Charity Rides Volunteers (2014–2020)

### Lead Organisers

Manjit S Randhawa  
Manjit S Sevea  
Luvinderpal Singh  
Diljit Singh

### Safety & Logistics

Melvinder Singh  
Manmohan Singh  
Avtar Singh

### Event Marshals

Alagiry Alagirisamy  
Amarjit Singh Narwal  
Amarjit Singh Wasan  
Amitjit Singh  
Ammrita Kaur  
Amritpreet Kaur  
Ananta Malhotra  
Arjan Singh  
Ashish K Chana  
Avtar Singh  
Balbir Singh  
Bellisha Kaur Gill  
Bhajan Kaur  
Bhupinder Singh  
Etasha Kaur Gill  
Foo Fung Sin, Desmond  
Gehna Chandna  
Gurcharan Singh  
Gursharan Kaur Sandhu

Hardave Singh  
Hardev Singh  
Inderpal Kaur  
Inderpal Singh  
Jagjote Singh  
Jarnail Singh  
Jeet Kaur  
Kacarska  
Kumar Sundrum  
Liang Xiuhua, Rydia  
Manjit Singh Sevea  
Manjit Singh Wahla  
Manmohan Singh  
Manpreet Kaur  
Melvinder Singh  
Mohan Singh  
Myra Shukla  
Narinder K Dhillon  
Noraini Bte Ismail  
Param Preet Kaur

Pinaki Ranjan Ray  
Prem Nair  
Prisha Kaur Gill  
Rajesh Singh  
Ramesh s/o Premnath  
Dr Ramnik Ahuja  
Ranjit Singh  
Raspal Kaur Dhillon  
Sarjit Kaur  
Satnam Singh  
Seetal Kaur Randhawa  
Sharanjit Kaur  
Shivani Raswan Pathania  
Simran Kaur Bajwa  
Simranjit Kaur  
Sonali Maheshwari  
Sukhbir Singh  
Sukhwinder Singh  
Tina Kishore Sajnani  
Vasanthan S.

### SIWEC Support Staff

Ranjit Singh Wahla, Karam Kaur, Gayethri, Jaspreet Kaur, Nelvinder Kaur, Baldev Singh, Sarafeen Kaur Twinky



## RTS 2019 Food Distribution

Upon completing the 2019 ride last March, a group of riders assembled in April to deliver the first packs of monthly rations to support 30 families of the Sunlove Day Activity Centre at Eunus.



## 2020 R2S Food Distribution

In 2020, the Ride2Serve (R2S) group of volunteers increased the number of families receiving food rations (Food for Ration Programme) from 30 in 2019, to 40 families residing in the Eunus area. This is part of an ongoing collaboration with Sunlove Senior Day Activity Centre sustained since 2019.



## RedDot Bhangra Campaigned Online to Raise Funds for SIWEC

RedDot Bhangra\* identified SIWEC as beneficiary for their fundraiser in support of SG Cares Giving Week 2020. The team campaigned online diligently for a month-long period from 8 November to 8 December 2020. They raised \$4,055 through contributions by 45 ardent supporters.

*\*RedDot Bhangra is a volunteer-run group that is dedicated to providing a platform for youth to engage with their roots and heritage through the main dance form of Punjabi culture. The multi-racial group also aims to foster understanding and harmony among diverse groups in Singapore through sharing the joy of Bhangra.*



3 virtual Bhangra workshops were conducted on the weekend of 4 to 6 December 2020.  
23 participants got to pick up a new skill while supporting a meaningful social cause.



# Volunteer Management

From its very inception, SIWEC has relied heavily on the unpaid work of volunteers and values their contribution highly. SIWEC is heavily indebted to all its volunteers doing selfless service every week. It is very difficult for SIWEC to undertake our activities without the support of our community of dedicated volunteers.

SIWEC’s pioneer staff Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada recounted the steadfast contribution of many Sikh volunteers who came forward regularly to support programmes set up by SIWEC since the early days.

Mr Jasbir named SIWEC’s pioneer volunteers who had made a significant contribution from the onset in 1995:

Bereavement Programme: the late Dilvinderjeet Singh (DJ), Manjit Singh, Dev, Charanjit Singh, Hardial Singh, and Madan Mohan Singh.

- Hospital Visits Programme: Mr Harmit Singh
- Ms Gurmit Kaur, Ms Paramjit Kaur & the late Ms Sukhpreet Kaur
- For the Prisons and DRC Visits Programme: Nirmal Singh, Dalijeet Singh, Gurpreet Singh, Swaran Singh, Kashmir Singh
- SIWEC Clinic and medical support programme: the late Dr Amar Kaur (then Head of ENT at Toa Payoh Hospital) led the project which provided free medical screening by volunteer nurses and doctors. The clinic based in Central Sikh Temple periodically rotated its services to other Gurdwaras. Nursing sister, Harjit Kaur coordinated the group of volunteer nurses

- A legal aid service was provided by Mr Harjeet Singh and his wife Gurmit Kaur (both practicing lawyers), with pro bono legal counsel and documentation for clients who could not afford to pay legal fees

Ever since, the network of volunteers has gradually expanded as additional areas of community need were identified. Fortunately, more people with appropriate skill sets stepped forward to assist SIWEC in our outreach and support work. Presently, SIWEC has about 200 active volunteers who provide invaluable help in aiding our staff to deliver our regular programmes in an effective and efficient manner. We ensure that volunteers working with SIWEC respect client confidentiality and participate in our programmes in a manner that is safe, significant, and fulfilling. All volunteers are provided structured training and orientation, as necessary. They are guided with respect and treated with gratitude for their contribution.

Our Volunteers By Programme	
Programme	Volunteers
Family Support	3
Education Support	1
Healthcare	4
Eldercare & Active Ageing	25
Community Mediation	9
Prison Counselling	18
Bereavement	8
Fund Raising	74
Total	142

## Appreciation Days

SIWEC has organised three Appreciation Day events in 2011, 2017 and 2019, to honour our supporters' contributions by showing our appreciation to all volunteers, regular donors, and community partner organisations.

At each event, we recognised our long-service volunteers and affirmed the sustained support of key institutions within the Sikh community, as well as other community partners such as SINDA and other social service & government agencies whose partnership has been vital to SIWEC's work. The highlights of these events are almost always the testimonies by volunteers and clients, sharing on the benefits and blessings they receive, and what keeps them going in their respective journeys.

### Appreciation Day 2011

SIWEC organised the inaugural Appreciation Day in 2011 with Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio GRC



Mr Inderjit Singh as Guest of Honour. The event was held at the Singapore Khalsa Association.

One of the significant moments was when MP Inderjit Singh presented tokens of appreciation from SIWEC to all heads of Sikh institutions and to CEO SINDA, in recognition of each institution's unstinting support of SIWEC's work since its inception in 1995.





The event got off to a memorable and rousing start to the Bhangra beat. The dancers enthused the assembled guests to rise and shine together in a spot of community dancing, led by our sporting Guest of Honour. He was joined by SIWEC management committee members past and present, community partners and guests as well!



*MP Inderjit Singh presented a token of appreciation to SINDA CEO Mr Raja Segar, for their assistance and continued collaboration with SIWEC since 1995.*



*A Memorable Moment — The first SIWEC Chairman Dr Sorinder Singh (middle) with Chairman and members of the third management committee (from left to right: Mr Dinesh Singh, Chairman Mr JJ Sekhon, Mr Kawal Pal Singh, and Mr Inderpal Singh).*



*Highlight of the event — MP Inderjit Singh and SIWEC Chairman Mr JJ Sekhon presenting volunteer service mementos to SIWEC's pioneers — our first Chairman Dr Sorinder Singh with management committee member and Prisons counsellor, Mr Kashmir Singh.*



## Appreciation Day 2017

On 1 April 2017, SIWEC hosted our second Appreciation Day at the newly refurbished Singapore Khalsa Association premises. The event was held to recognise the contribution of our volunteers, donors, and community partners. Our Guest of Honour, Senior Minister of State, PMO and MP for Jalan Besar GRC Mr Heng Chee How expressed his strong support for SIWEC's efforts to engage the community and reach out to serve those in need of help during difficult times.



*Words of welcome by Ms Simran Kaur, the event host, a member of SIWEC management committee.*



*SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma delivers the opening address.*



*Mr Heng applauded SIWEC volunteers for their work during his address.*



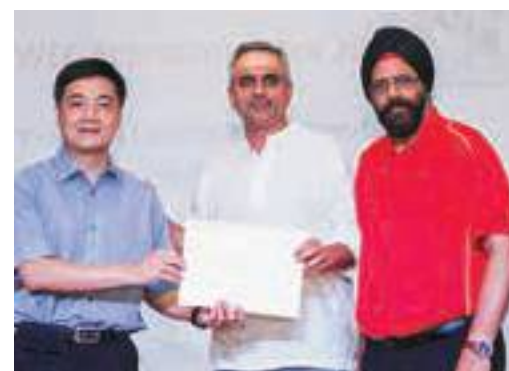
*SMS Heng was accompanied by SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma to present tokens of appreciation to Sikh institutions and key community partners such as SINDA and Singapore Prisons Service.*



*Mdm Sarjit Kaur received the long-service volunteer certificate from Senior Minister of State (PMO) Mr Heng Chee How at SIWEC's Appreciation Day.*



*Singapore Prisons Service representative Ms Serena Lim received the token of appreciation from SMS Heng.*



*SMS Mr Heng, accompanied by SIWEC Chairman Mr Gurdip Singh Usma, presenting the long-service appreciation certificate to bereavement service volunteer Mr Surinder Singh.*



## Volunteer Testimonial



*Mrs Kamaljit Kaur Toor reflected on her experience as a member of the volunteer team organising Eldercare programme activities and outings. She shared her joy in interpreting talks by presenters and trainers into Punjabi so that seniors with limited proficiency in English could follow, understand, and practise together.*

*I feel this is the highest form of Sewa to incarcerated humans. I will continue doing this Sewa as long as my health permits. I call upon my fellow Sikh brothers and sisters to take this road less travelled, to help rehabilitate and reintegrate inmates back into the community as responsible members of society.*

— Mdm Balbir Kaur



*Client expressing gratitude and sharing how her family coped through difficult times with the financial and psycho-social support provided by SIWEC.*



*SIWEC's first female volunteer Prison's counsellor, Mdm Balbir Kaur.*



*Mrs Sarjit Khosa (2<sup>nd</sup> seated from left) with Eldercare programme volunteers enjoying the opportunity to reflect together and celebrate their contribution to keeping seniors in the community active and socially engaged.*



*Mrs Sarjit Kaur Khosa, management committee member who steers SIWEC's seniors programme, presented a card designed by seniors to Mr Heng, thanking him for engaging SIWEC volunteers, donors, clients and well-wishers gathered at the Singapore Khalsa Association for a wholesome Saturday afternoon to celebrate and recognise our volunteers and stakeholders.*





*Guest of Honour, SMS Heng Chee How, with former MP Inderjit Singh, SIWEC Chairman Gurdip Singh Usma and our Trustees Mr JJ Sekhon, Mr & Mrs Naranjan S Brahpura and Mr Mohinder Singh Thakral, accompanied by his son Mr Rajbir Singh Thakral.*



*SIWEC Manager Ranjit Singh & Senior Welfare Officer Mr Baldev Singh with our Prison HQ representatives Mr Jonathan Lin and Ms Serena Lim.*



*SMS Heng (centre) sportingly joined SIWEC Manager Ranjit Singh and his staff for a memorable photo at the fun booth set up for all guests. (Anti-clockwise from left to right: Mr Sebastian Ng, Ms Jaspreet Kaur, Mr Ranjit Singh, Mr Baldev Singh, Ms Nelvinder Kaur, Ms Gayethri and Mdm Kartar Kaur)*



| Recognising SIWEC's valued partners — Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF) and Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA).



| Active members of Sunehri Sahelian turned up in significant numbers to enjoy the event.



## Appreciation Day 2019

Twenty-seven volunteers received long service award certificates from Mr Amrin Amin, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs and Health. He was Guest of Honour at the Sikh Welfare Council's (SIWEC) Appreciation Day held on 24 February 2019.

Volunteers were recognised for their contributions in various capacities: bereavement support, prisons counselling, organising senior citizens' activities (Sunehri Saheliyan & Sunehray Pal), education support, and for serving on SIWEC's management committee to steer its outreach, development, and fund-raising efforts.



| SIWEC Long Service Award recipients.



*Ms Kamaljeet Kaur Toor spoke on her meaningful and fulfilling volunteer journey especially with the Sunehri Sahelian programme.*



*Mrs Sarjit Khosa was recognised for her Sewa with SIWEC.*



*Ms Ajaib Kaur reflected on the immense value of staying socially engaged and physically active through engaging in programmes and outings organised by SIWEC.*



*Mr Ishwar Lal Singh (centre), then 90 years old, is a nursing home resident at Sree Narayana Mission Home in Yishun. He shared his heartfelt appreciation for SIWEC's visiting and befriending programme, which keeps him connected to people and happenings in the Sikh community.*





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## OUR PROGRAMMES & SERVICES



# Overview

## Our Annual Impact

Over the past 3 to 5 years, SIWEC served about 1,200 individuals and family units annually. In 2020 however, the number served declined to just below 1000 as a result of the disruption to our activities during the Covid-19 circuit-breaker period. Our engagement activities ceased until restrictions were

slightly relaxed in the latter half of 2020. For certain programmes whenever practical, we adapted support to online modes to sustain the continued support of our clients. Throughout 2020 however, we ensured that all financial assistance support to clients continued without disruption.



Family  
Support

96



Community  
Outreach

300



Education  
Support

125



Bereavement  
Service

91



Healthcare

50



Health  
Screening

140



Eldercare &  
Active Ageing

226



Counselling  
& Mediation

82



Prison Counselling  
& Aftercare

90

TOTAL:

1200

# Services Offered to Various Target Groups

SIWEC serves and engages about 1200 beneficiaries annually through its range of support services and programmes in the following categories: Community, Youth, Family and Seniors.



## Community

Bereavement Support  
*(Sikhs residing in Singapore)*

Health Screening  
*Community Touchpoints  
(Gurdwaras & SKA @ Gurpurabs  
& Vesakhi)*

Volunteer Engagement (R2S)  
*Ration Distribution @ Eunost*

Fund-raising Activities  
*(Charity Cycle Rides; Dinner &  
High Tea functions;  
Virtual Campaigns)*

Talks & Workshops  
– *Mental & Physical Health*  
– *Financial & Legal Matters*  
– *Government Policies*

SIWEC Appreciation Day  
*Community Partners; Volunteers;  
Donors & Well-Wishers*



## Youth

Financial Assistance Scheme  
*(SSEF Punjabi School students)*

Academic Excellence  
Programme

Tuition Programme  
*(for Children of Client Families)*

Psycho-social & Tuition  
Young Sikhs @ Children's &  
Boys'/Girls' Homes



## Family

Financial Assistance  
*(SIWEC Client Families)*

Academic Excellence  
Programme

Food on the Table  
*(SIWEC Client Families)*

Food for Rations  
*(Ration Distribution@Eunos)*

Prison Visits & Counselling;  
Aftercare Support@ Ashram &  
Chardi Kala Chats

In-House Counselling &  
Community Mediation



## Seniors

Active Seniors Programme  
Sunehri Sahelian &  
Sunehray Pal

Befriending Visits  
@ Institutional Homes &  
Hospitals

Befriending Visits  
to residence-based Seniors

Psycho-Social & Counselling  
Support/Mediation  
*(Seniors in the Community)*



## Our Touchpoints

### 24-hour SIWEC Hotline: 6299 9234

- For the past 25 years, one of SIWEC's key services has been our 24-hour community hotline, available for those in the community seeking immediate guidance, counselling support or assistance with bereavements. The hotline is supported by our trained staff who are ready to respond at short notice.
- During office hours, the hotline functions as an essential information and referral service on SIWEC's programmes and services, as well as other specialised services provided by social service agencies located across the island.

### Online donation platforms:

-  <https://www.siwec.org/donate-online>
- Give.asia**  
[https://give.asia/charity/sikh\\_welfare\\_council](https://give.asia/charity/sikh_welfare_council)
- Giving.sg**  
<https://www.giving.sg/siwec>
- Paypal**  
<https://www.siwec.org/fundraising/donations/donate-online>

### Our social media & online presence:

-  <https://www.siwec.org>
-  [info@siwec.org](mailto:info@siwec.org)
-  <https://www.siwec.org/downloads/newsletters-siwec-insight>
-  **Sikh Welfare Council**
-  [siwec.sg](https://www.instagram.com/siwec.sg)

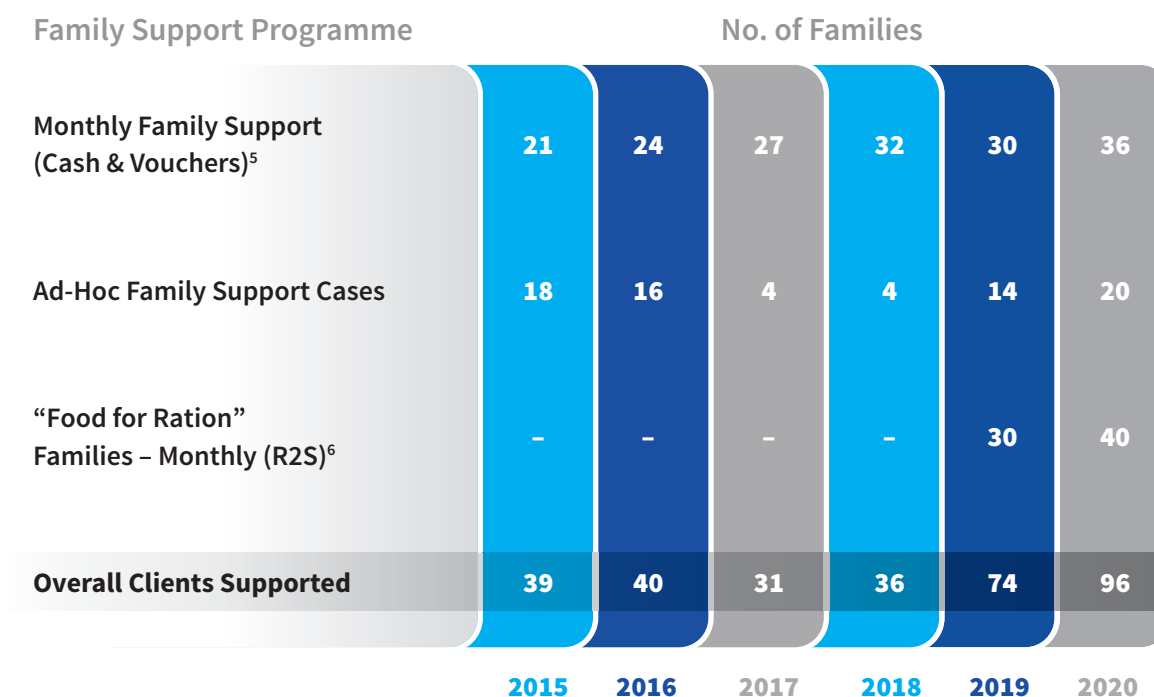


# Family Support

SIWEC believes in helping to meet the needs of our client-families by providing additional support through our Financial Assistance and Food on the Table programmes. We assess and provide assistance to Singaporean families in need of financial, food, informational and socio-emotional support.

As one of SIWEC's key initiatives since inception, this programme supports financially challenged families. We strive to ensure that no family facing financial difficulties gets turned away or is left behind.

Up to 2010, the number of families supported ranged between 50–70. As those families became more financially independent, over the last 10 years, the number of families supported has ranged between 20–30 families annually. In 2020, the number of families supported increased to 36; the increase was partly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on jobs.

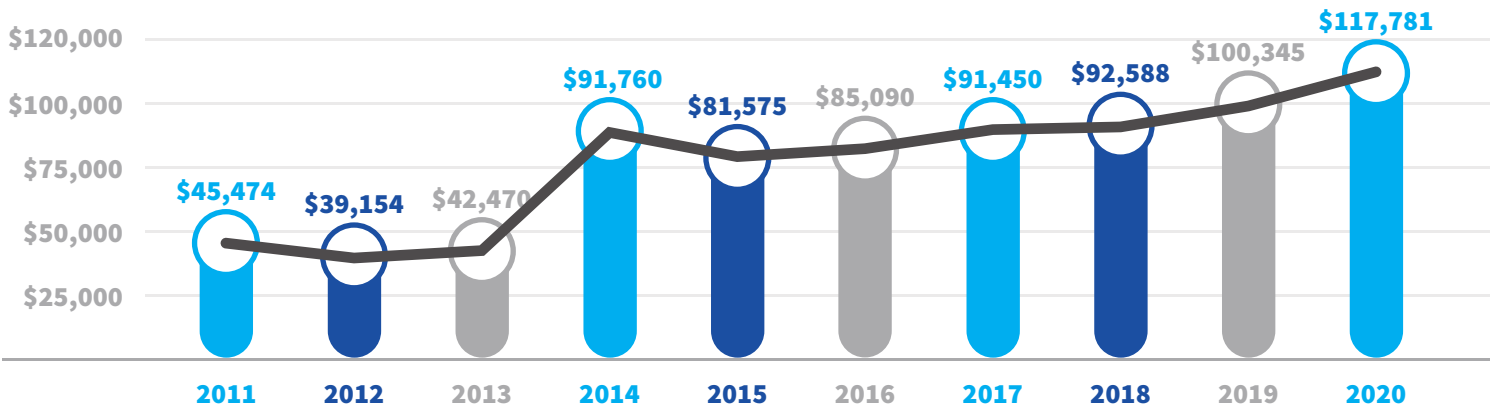


<sup>5</sup>Financial Assistance (FA) and Food on the Table (NTUC vouchers).

<sup>6</sup>A new programme by Ride2Serve volunteers in 2019, this is done in collaboration with SunDAC (Sunlove Day Activity Centre) @ Eunos to distribute monthly rations to 40 families.



Family Support Programme Cost (2011–2020)



**Annual Support** — The amount of support provided per family has increased over the years in line with the rising cost of living, using guidelines from the authorities. By 2020, SIWEC is spending about \$118,000 on financial assistance and rations for our beneficiaries.

**Client Family Profile** — The profile of clients includes single-parent families with small children, seniors living independently, families whose breadwinners are unable to work due to medical conditions, families and spouses of incarcerated persons, physically and mentally-challenged individuals, and families with special needs, as well as those requiring temporary financial assistance due to retrenchment from work. On average, about 5 client-families are admitted annually, with about the same number becoming financially stable and self-sufficient. This usually occurs after one or more family members have secured jobs drawing sufficient income to independently support the family.

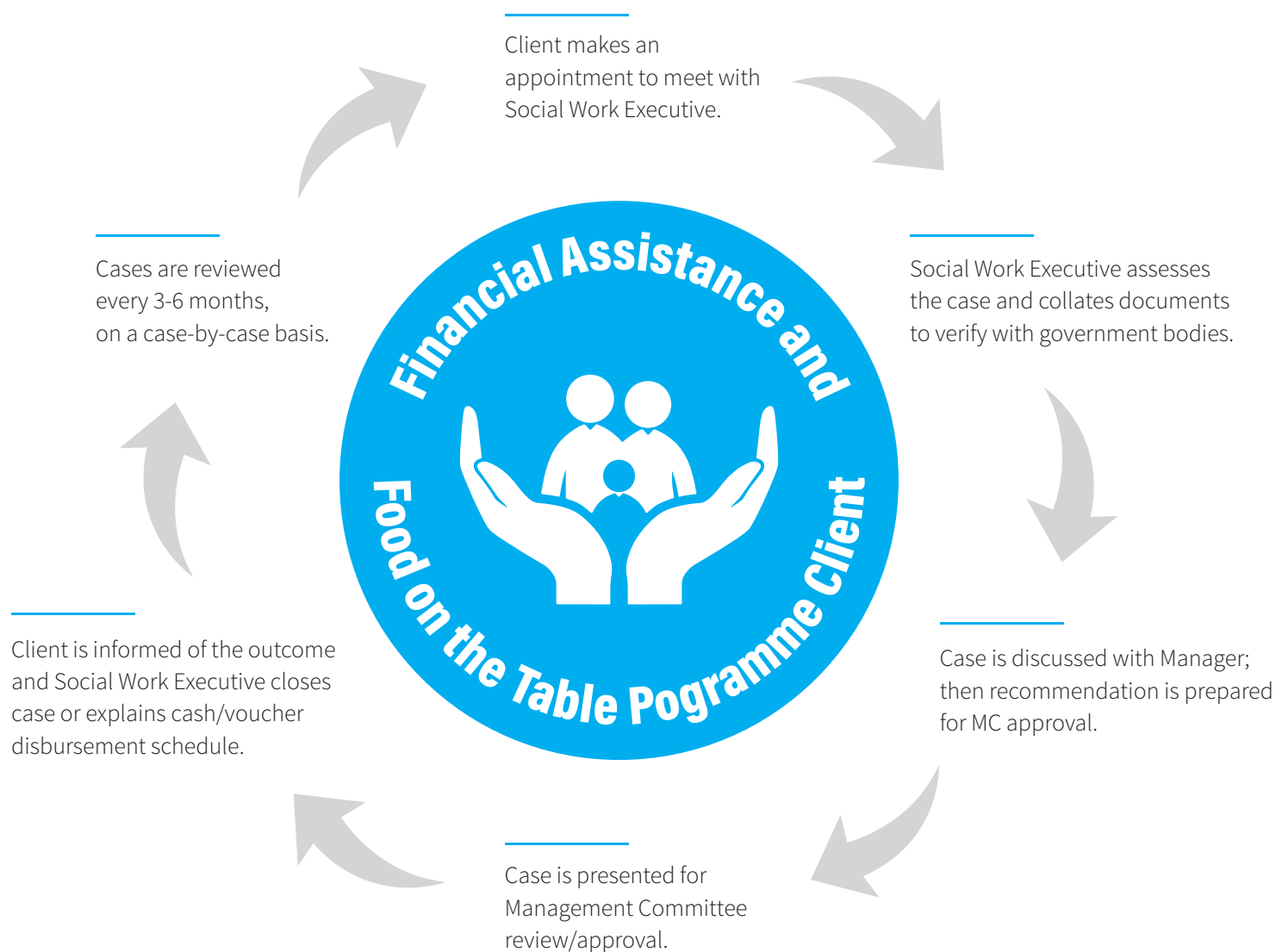
**Support for Non-Sikh Families** — Since securing IPC status, our programmes became more inclusive and secular as we widened the net to also support disadvantaged non-Sikh families. During the past

10 years, between 10 and 20 percent of our client-families were non-Sikh. In total, between 8-10 non-Sikh families were supported annually over the last 5 years. In 2020 though, the percentage of non-Sikh families supported was 25 percent of the total. This inclusiveness reflects the Sarbat da Bhalla spirit of Sikhi, to support all segments of society needing help, regardless of race or religion.

**Facilitating Access to Prevailing Assistance and Subsidies** — Sustained efforts are made to assist the families to access relevant assistance via prevailing government subsidy schemes administered by the Social Service Office (SSO) and other agencies. In cases where the family continues to face a significant shortfall after such assistance has been secured, the shortfall is then met by SIWEC, either in cash or NTUC food vouchers, or a prudent combination of both.

**Ad-hoc Support** — In certain cases, ad-hoc assistance is extended to challenged families on a short-term basis. This helps affected families tide over a crisis period with assistance in addressing their immediate cash needs until their situation has stabilised.

## Family Support Approval and Review Process



**Confidentiality** — A periodic review of each client family is presented by the Welfare Officer for endorsement by the Client Review Committee. Effort is made to ensure that client-identities are anonymised such that only the principal's initials, gender and age are highlighted (e.g. Mr A, male, aged 56 years). As such, near-complete confidentiality is maintained for all cases managed by SIWEC.

**Periodic Review** — Cases are assessed and approved on their respective merits, recognising that each family or individual circumstance is different. Periodic quarterly or half-yearly reviews are done to evaluate cases and determine for how long the assistance is required. Client information is closely guarded and shared on a very selective basis, only where it benefits the client, and with their express consent.

**Financial Assistance Quantum** — The management committee reviews the financial assistance quantum allotted to client-families based on a formula; to fund the shortfall after the family's total income is compared with the minimum per person subsistence amount (as recommended by the authorities) multiplied by the number of members in the family. The final assistance sum is disbursed in the form of cash deposits into the family's or individual's bank account, along with NTUC vouchers for purchasing monthly groceries.

**Multi-Pronged Approach towards Financial Sustainability** — The outcome we seek beyond providing financial support is to help stabilise these families until they are financially independent enough to leave the programme. This requires close collaboration with frontline agencies including the network of Social Service Offices (SSOs) and the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to help client-

families access government subsidies for which they qualify, and to also be matched with available jobs or retraining opportunities at the earliest opportunity. Where practical, client-families are urged to consider options to secure income e.g., by renting out an extra room (where feasible) to ease their financial dependency.

**Payment of Medical Treatment Expenses** — In cases where the family breadwinner requires medical treatment which they may have deferred or avoided due to concerns over payment, our welfare officers connect them with medical social workers in the relevant hospitals for psycho-social and financial counselling, to help reassure them to seek the necessary treatment and undergo rehabilitation until they recover. We seek to help the client regain fitness to enable them to eventually rejoin the workforce and pay off (by instalments) the remainder of the non-subsidised outstanding portion of their medical bills.

**Ensuring Adequacy of Support** — Welfare officers review all beneficiary families' status every 6 months to ensure adequacy of support. They keep in contact (via home visits or phone calls) on a periodic basis in between reviews, to offer psycho-social support where required, and to keep updated on developments in the clients' financial/employment status or medical/psychological condition.

**Accessing Housing and Utilities Subsidies** — SIWEC assists client-families by working with SINDA to place financially challenged families on RUAS (subsidy on rental, utilities and service and conservancy charges). Our welfare officers also help source second-hand furniture, functioning electrical items, and useful household items from donor-households for our client-families to use.



**Liaising with HDB and Utilities Companies** — In addressing client-families' general concerns, our officers engage the Housing Development Board (HDB) and utilities companies (e.g., Singapore Power, Public Utilities Board etc) to help negotiate settlement of the accumulated arrears of client-families.

**Holistic Family Support** — Beyond the financial aspects, our welfare officers also identify children from client-families who require educational assistance. In some cases, some of these children are residing away from the family home, in juvenile and childrens' homes. In such instances, our Education Project Officer (EPO) works with our welfare officer to liaise with schools, juvenile or children's homes (e.g., Singapore Girls' & Boys' Home) to provide socio-emotional support and counselling besides assessing needs to arrange relevant tutors so that their studies do not suffer. In such cases, there is consultation and collaboration with the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF) and other educational institutions, when necessary.

**Multi-Agency Liaison** — To undertake much of the work outlined above, SIWEC's staff team also liaises with various government agencies to coordinate social assistance for clients. This includes engaging the island-wide network of Social Service Offices (SSO); healthcare agencies including the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), restructured hospitals, intermediate and long-term care facilities such as community hospitals, nursing homes and disability homes; HDB on housing-related issues, as well as Home Team agencies Prisons and Police when required.

**Timely Assistance** — We often tap into our network of generous donors, well-wishers, and volunteers to provide responsive assistance to address the most pressing issues promptly while cases are pending

approval. For example, to arrange for essential items like rice-cookers, refrigerators or beds and furniture for a family in dire need of such items.

## Testimonials

*We are very thankful for the help we have received from the Sikh Welfare Community. It has helped us afford our daily necessities and allow us to live a comfortable life. We are once again, very grateful for all that the Sikh Welfare Community has helped us with.*

— Gurmit Singh & Family

*I would like to thank the Sikh Welfare Council for the care and concern given to me and my family for the past few years in many ways. Visiting me in hospital when I was admitted and giving my family support and strength. Providing cash top-up of \$200 a month. Providing us with NTUC vouchers to purchase our monthly needs. Calling often and checking on our status and needs. Helping and assisting my son on his next step. Supplying ration and festive cookies. Coordinating with SSO and other organisations for transport vouchers and services. Thanks to Miss Jass for the kind assistance and help rendered to us all this while.*

— Ganapathi & Family

# Counselling & Mediation

## In-House Counselling

SIWEC provides in house counselling and advice in the Counselling Room on Level 6. We get between 10–12 drop-ins at the SIWEC office monthly. These are normally people seeking information and advice to clarify their doubts on eligibility for available government assistance schemes, referrals to agencies for professional help, employment opportunities, work permit matters, labour disputes, and also for translation assistance.

Our staff members also provide a listening ear on pressing issues facing each client. Those requiring counselling on issues beyond SIWEC's expertise are connected with specialised professionals or community-based agencies for more specific and targeted help, such as mental health, assistance on legal matters, employment placement, or caregiving support services for their disabled or elderly loved ones.

## Community Mediation

In 2017, a group of pioneer volunteers and SIWEC welfare officers completed a 3-day mediation course conducted by Ms Rina Kalpanath Singh, a qualified legal mediator. Our community mediation programme offers a non-confrontational option for those seeking to voluntarily engage each other in family dispute resolution through a responsible and trusted third party.

SIWEC's focus is to only mediate in family-related matters, and not in financial or commercial disputes. Mediation by SIWEC is purely a social contract and is not legally binding. No agreement or document from the mediation is admissible or enforceable in court. This is made clear to family members from the onset.



| Our Community Mediation Volunteers with the trainer Ms Rina Kalpanath Singh (Centre).

Our volunteer mediators strive to provide a safe and conducive setting to help resolve family conflict in a mutually respectful manner, with an amicable outcome for both parties. To date, SIWEC has mediated 3 cases in 2019, with satisfactory outcomes in 2 of the cases. The presented issues so far include inter-generational conflict, seniors feeling neglected and abandoned, and apparently irreconcilable family conflict between one spouse and one or more of their in-laws.

The process commences through a request from the client to SIWEC to seek mediation using the prescribed form. Full confidentiality is maintained for all clients. Appointment of mediators is initiated

only after our volunteer counsellors confirm there is no conflict of interest on their part, and with the consent of the parties involved.

Notably, the fear of stigma and legitimate confidentiality concerns could deter family members from seeking mediation proactively. There were no successful mediation cases in 2020, as compared with 3 in 2019. We recognise that it takes a lot for couples or families to voluntarily request for mediation to resolve a family conflict. Yet, we remain committed to providing mediation as a viable alternative to help reconcile families experiencing conflict in a non-threatening and safe intra-community setting, away from the very public courts system.



Counselling session in progress.

Counselling Support & Advice	2020	2019
Community Mediation	0	3
In-House Counselling & Advice		
• Counselling & Advice	43	73
• Referrals to Government Agencies	54	32
• Other (referral to other agencies or job referrals)	14	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>113</b>

The number of clients referred to government agencies (54) was a significant increase in 2020, reflecting more people seeking assistance due to the impact of Covid-19.

### Our Community Mediation Volunteers

Karpal Singh Mehli (Programme Coordinator)			
Amarjit Singh Khaira	Dilbagh Singh	Gurdip Singh Usma	Sarjit Kaur Khosa
Deep Singh	Diljit Singh Athwal	Kamaljeet Kaur Toor	Surjit Singh Wasan



# Education Support

Education support has been another area where SIWEC has strived to help uplift children from client-families since 1995. In the earlier days of SIWEC, free tuition was provided on an informal basis, particularly for children of families on our Financial Assistance and Food on the Table programmes. Presently, education support is provided in two key areas — the Punjabi language education support programme, and the Academic Excellence Programme (AEP).

The Punjabi Language Education Support was initiated in 2014 when SIWEC started providing financial assistance to children from lower income families studying Punjabi under the SSEF Punjabi

language programme. Essentially, all students on the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) in their regular schools qualify for the subsidy which covers school fees, examination fees, books, and uniforms. Since 2017, the scheme has been extended to also include all children living in smaller (1–3 room) HDB flats. With the consolidation of Punjabi classes by SSEF at one centre in 2019, SIWEC now also subsidises transport costs for Punjabi school students on the FAS.

The amount disbursed annually corresponds to the number of students each year. The number of students and the funding cost since 2014 is shown below.

## Education Support Programme

No. of Students	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FAS	107	81	84	102	82	75	79
Children Home	5	2	2	4	3	4	5
AEP	0	17	18	28	36	40	34
Tuition	0	0	13	19	18	7	7
Total	112	100	117	153	139	126	125

Cost	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FAS	\$42,800	\$32,400	\$33,600	\$42,840	\$34,440	\$31,500	\$32,550
AEP Tuition		\$17,953	\$27,543	\$30,822	\$35,726	\$38,046	\$29,715
Staff Cost		\$31,601	\$43,153	\$88,164	\$56,965	\$46,105	\$38,931
Transport						\$10,728	\$9,103
Subtotal	\$42,800	\$81,954	\$104,295	\$161,825	\$127,131	\$126,380	\$110,299
IT Support							\$51,761
Total	\$42,800	\$81,954	\$104,295	\$161,825	\$127,131	\$126,380	\$162,060

During the Covid-19 circuit breaker period in early 2020, as all schools moved to home-based learning via classes delivered online, SSEF faced a challenge as Punjabi language teachers were not equipped with laptop computers. To ensure that our children's language education did not suffer, SIWEC funded the purchase of 57 laptop computers at \$51,760.70. These were provided to SSEF teachers to enable the continued delivery of the Punjabi language programme online to all students.

### Academic Excellence Programme (AEP)

Around 2012, the community noted that the performance of our students in core subjects (English, Mathematics and Science) was falling below the national averages across cohorts. After reviewing the issue, the Task Force recommended a programme to provide special assistance to weaker students, to be co-managed by the SIWEC and the SSEF. This led to the birth of the AEP.

The programme matches students facing learning challenges at school to tutors, to help close the learning

gaps with their more advantaged peers. Initially the programme covered only mainstream subjects such as Mathematics, Science and English, but since 2020, Punjabi language has also been included.

The AEP was formally launched in 2014, when a qualified EPO was recruited to manage the programme. The initial focus in 2014 was on weak students in Primary 1 and 2. As the programme stabilised, the focus widened each subsequent year, to include cohorts from the next higher level.

Over the last 5 years, 30 to 35 students from Primary 1 to Primary 6 (on average) have benefited from the programme. In 2017, the programme was extended to include a few secondary level students. This was in response to requests from parents whose children had benefited significantly from AEP assistance at the primary level.

#### The AEP process

The Education Programme Officer (EPO) works closely with tutors to ensure that gaps in learning are identified early and the necessary interventions are put in place. Where the family can afford to pay the tutor, fees are paid by the family. Where the family has financial constraints, the tutor's fee is fully paid by SIWEC, through the Financial Assistance Scheme.

The EPO, together with the SSEF Punjabi school principals, actively identify the students who need support to cope with their academic subjects. The EPO follows up with the students, their parents, and tutors, to ensure progress. Where possible (and when the need arises), the EPO also works with the students' regular schoolteachers, counsellors, and other relevant educators. Monthly, the EPO makes house visits to monitor and assess the students' development.



*Students attending tuition classes.*

The main overheads of running the programme include the cost of employing the full-time EPO and the total cost which SIWEC pays to the tutors supporting the programme. Current total expenses stand at about \$140,000 per year. Primarily, fund-raising efforts by Harmony on Wheels (HOW) through Ride for Charity (RFC) at the onset, and lately Ride to Serve (R2S), have helped to fund a significant part of these annual expenses.

Over the past 7 years, the programme has helped more than 60 students. Our assessment is that students are more motivated and their improved academic performance over the years is testimony to its success. The success of the AEP hinges quite heavily on engaging competent tutors with the experience and passion for teaching.

### Challenges

The AEP has been successfully implemented due to the close collaboration between SSEF and SIWEC. Undoubtedly, major challenges were faced over the years. One continuing challenge is the varying level of parental engagement in their children's educational development among different client-families. Our



The AEP support team in 2019 (from left): Ms Gursharan Kaur (EPO), Mdm Gurmeet Kaur (Vice-Chairman, SSEF), and Mr Jasbir Singh (Principal, SSEF).

EPO attempts to bridge gaps where they exist, as far as possible. As a community project which seeks to uplift our future generations, this programme will continue to be given due emphasis and significance well into the future.



The 2018 PSLE group at Central Sikh Temple where volunteer tutors Mr Kawaljeet Singh and Mrs Suvinder Kaur conducted Math and Science classes weekly.



## Achievements

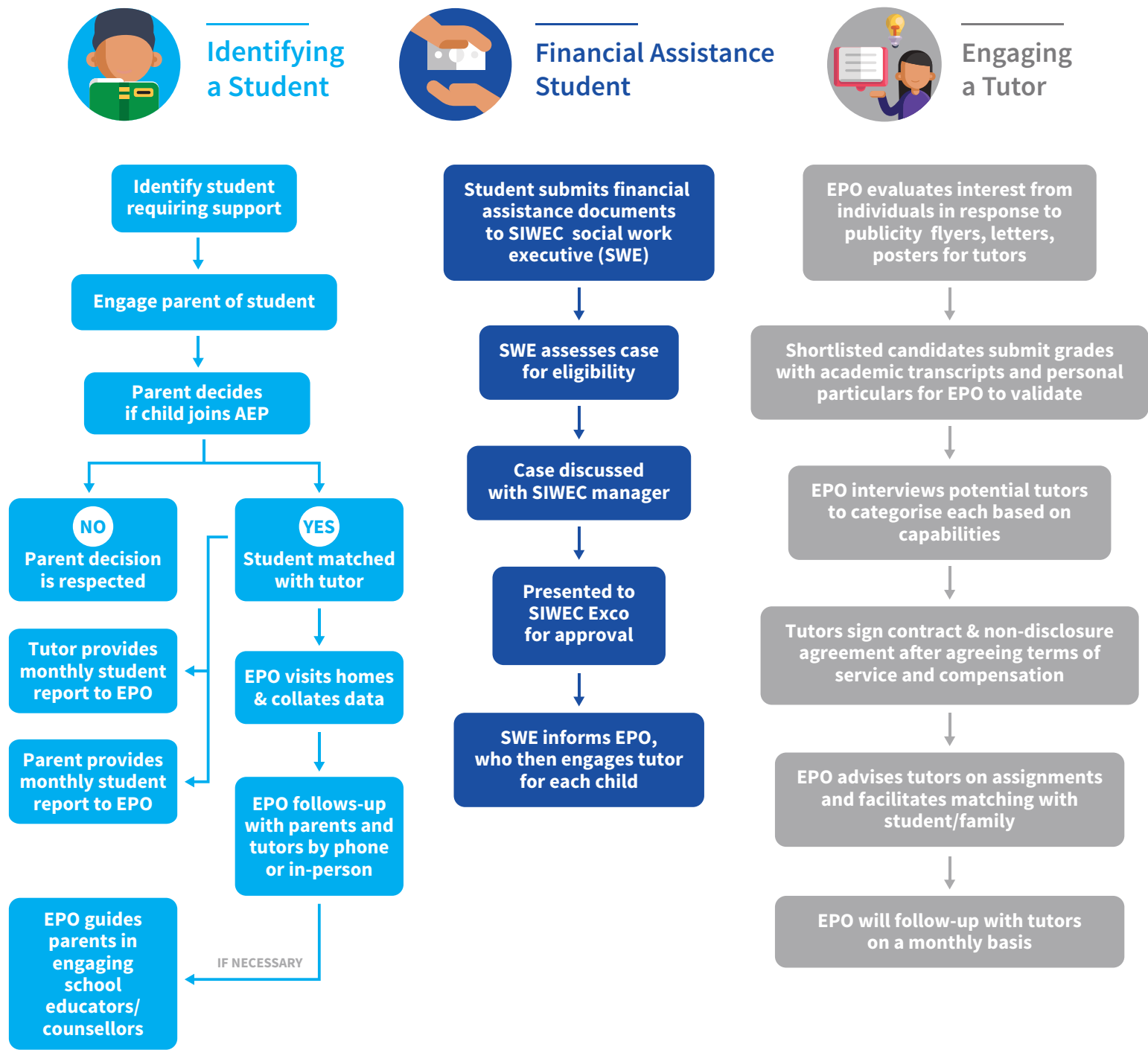
Two students from AEP, Harveenpal and Sonalijeet both received awards for the significant improvements they had made. In 2019, Sonalijeet received the Most Improved Student Award and the Top in Class Award, while Harveenpal received the

Class Award for good academic performance and the CHAMP Award. Harveenpal's achievement was featured in a "Success Story of AEP" during the 2018 President's Challenge.



Another devoted tutor, Ms Kayyathiri, with 10 years of tutoring experience, has guided our student Harveenpal since he was in lower primary, and Sonalijeet since March 2019. Ms Kayyathiri's ability to motivate her students in all aspects of life and to adopt different teaching methods has led to her students doing well in the 2019 Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE).

Academic Excellence Programme Process Flow



## Parents' and Students' Testimonies

*Through the Academic Excellence Programme, supported by SIWEC, my children were assigned a tutor to support their educational needs.*

*Tharini is an exemplary tutor who has guided my children very well. She pays close attention to the areas they are weak in and works with them to strengthen those areas. Her positivity and encouragement help the children improve themselves. They have progressed academically, and we are glad to have been paired up with a wonderful teacher.*

*Thank you to the Academic Excellence Programme and SIWEC.*

— Manmeet Kaur,  
March 2021

*Stepping into P6 feeling petrified and filled with fear of failing my first national exam was not a joke. Seeing my report book with borderline passes and failing my Maths and Science, was when my parents knew I needed help urgently.*

*Coming from a financially challenged background, my parents got help for me through the Academic Excellence Programme, with financial support from SIWEC, which changed my life drastically.*

*I was assigned Tutor Kayyathiri with just six months to my PSLE, and she helped me achieve wonders with my scores. Her guidance and her comprehensive tutoring techniques made me understand what she taught easily.*

*From failing my Maths and Science, I became a class topper. I was able to get into the Express stream and now am maintaining A1s in my Secondary Education. I have additionally been awarded multiple bursaries and awards such as "Most Improved Student".*

— Sonalijit Kaur, March 2021

*My son, Harveenpal Singh, was one of the weakest students in his class. His teacher, observing his poor grades, advised me to get help for him. That is when I came across the Academic Excellence Programme, supported by SIWEC. When I reached out to them, they assigned a tutor, Ms Kayyathiri, to us.*

*She has been a great support to Harveen and gradually his scores started to increase. Her dedication in clearing all his doubts showed how passionate she was in tutoring, which encouraged my son every step of the way.*

*SIWEC has been sponsoring Harveen's Academic Excellence Programme tuition since he was in Primary 2 and my son is now in the Express Stream in Secondary School.*

*We are really grateful and happy for the support SIWEC has provided our son and how it has helped change his education.*

— Sukhjot Kaur, March 2021

*The Sikh Welfare Council has been providing my family and I with assistance and support through various avenues. They have gone the extra mile in assigning tutors for my children's educational needs through the Academic Excellence Programme, in addition, supporting us with the tutor's fees as well.*

*The tutor assigned to my children, Balveen, is very dedicated. She has very good knowledge of the subject matters and great teaching skills. My children have started to show much interest in Science and Maths.*

*When in doubt, my children are forthcoming in asking for clarifications. Their confidence has increased, and I highly recommend her as a tutor for students.*

*We thank SIWEC and the Academic Excellence Programme for having our best interest at heart and improving the welfare of the community.*

— Anonymous, March 2021



# SIWEC Mentorship (YUVA)

In 2012, Mdm Gurmit Kaur Sroya championed the SIWEC Youth Mentoring Programme (YUVA). The fresh initiative was a cross-age, developmental mentoring programme that sought to pair older youths with younger youths in a mentor-mentee relationship. SIWEC initiated the Youth Mentoring Programme (YUVA) in early 2012, with the support of all Sikh institutions.

The initial group of nine youth volunteers went through four Sundays of training to equip them with mentoring skills. The programme included hands-on activities, experiential learning, group discussion and role playing. Following the training, they sat for and passed an assessment to qualify as youth mentors.

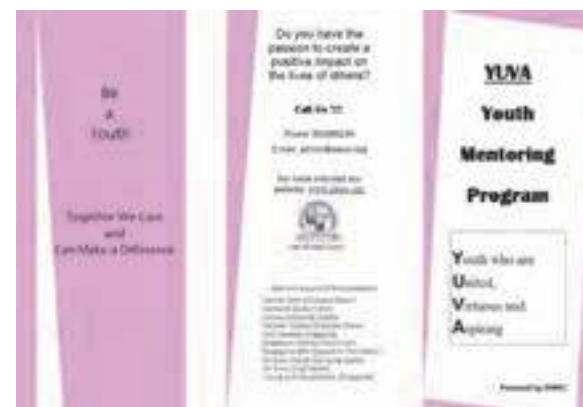
After six months, the youth mentors received their certificates from Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon, Chairman of the Sikh Welfare Council. Several Sikh community leaders were present to lend support to the programme.

The SIWEC Mentorship Programme was formally launched on 11 February 2012 during the Young Sikh Association (YSA) 'Racial Harmony' 4 A-Side Football Tournament at Uber Sports Football Courts. The Guest of Honour, Mr Michael Palmer, Speaker of Parliament and Member of Parliament for Punggol East, presented a cheque for \$16,100 for the launch of the SIWEC Mentorship Programme to SIWEC Chairman, Mr JJ Sekhon, at the start of the tournament.

In mid-2015, the community decided that Sikh youth organisations were best placed to manage and sustain the mentorship programme given their mandate and direct access to engaging Sikh youth in Sewa.



| Mdm Gurmit Kaur Sroya.



## Volunteers and Youth Mentors in the Programme

Mdm Gurmit Kaur Sroya led a team of youth mentors, comprising Mr Ajapaul Dhot, Ms Divjot Kaur, Ms Harjit Kaur, Mr Rakbir Singh and Ms Sharin Dev Kaur.



| Youth mentors with SIWEC Chairman JJ Sekhon, Mdm Gurmit Sroya & community leaders.



## Eldercare & Active Ageing

In late 2014, the Sikh leadership saw the need to engage seniors to participate in social and recreational engagement activities including games and handicraft to stimulate their cognitive abilities and enhance their physical and mental well-being.

SIWEC approached a group of community volunteers to kick-start an activity programme for seniors above 70. Mrs Sarjit Kaur Khosa, SIWEC management committee member and Advisor to the Senior Citizens activity group recounted, “Having joined and attended WINGS (Women’s Initiative for Ageing Gracefully) activities since 2007 with a few like-minded friends, we were urged by its founding president Dr Kanwaljit Soin to initiate similar activities for women in the Sikh community.

“I was happy to be advisor of the group at SIWEC as I drew confidence from the highly motivated volunteer team which came together to run the programme. We collaborated with the Council for Third Age (C3A) to come up with engaging activities. We were all very excited to reach out to ladies in our community above 70 and delighted that our initial concerns about their response were soon put to rest.”

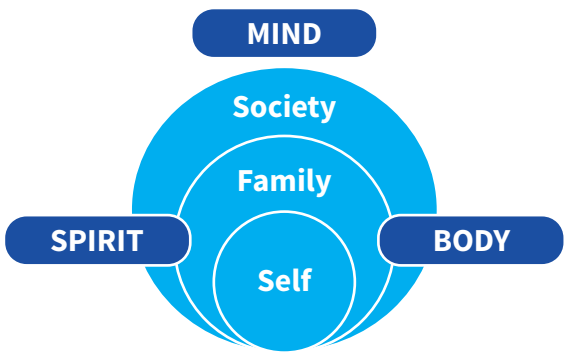
In July 2014, 10 volunteers rolled up their sleeves to brainstorm on a novel programme that would enrich the lives of seniors by helping to improve their physical, mental, spiritual, and social health by empowering them with knowledge and skills to bring them joy, happiness, and peace in their golden years. The volunteer team coined a name for the pilot programme (Sunehri Sahelian), developed a holistic approach, sought a suitable location, and fixed the day and time for the activities to be conducted.



*Volunteers' team meeting to plan activities for seniors. Standing: Jheet Kaur, Anita Sindhi, Charanjeet Kaur, Gurmeet Kaur. Sitting: Satwant Kaur, Pritam Kaur, Herwinder Kaur, Sarjit Kaur Khosa, Jasbir Kaur, Paramjeet Kaur, Balbir Kaur, Rajwant Kaur.*



The holistic Sunehri Sahelian approach



Sunehri Sahelian & Sunehray Pal  
Participants & Volunteers

Mrs Khosa recounted, “The pilot programme had a modest start in 2014 at Central Sikh Gurdwara (Towner Road) with 30 senior ladies. The team of 10 volunteers led by programme coordinator Mdm Charanjeet Kaur, a retired schoolteacher, with an impressive network, and unlimited resources, worked diligently to coordinate health talks and light exercise sessions, cooking, and flower arrangement classes, as well as outings around Singapore.”

Mdm Charanjeet shared, “We got busy to source for suitable activities, visiting fairs like the 50+ Senior Expo and the C3A road shows to engage suitable speakers and identify suitable workshops as well as source for funds. We approached the National Kidney Foundation, Health Promotion Board, Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Khoo Teck Puat Hospital for doctors to give talks on diabetes, heart problems, dementia, and other health-related issues. Nutritionists from these hospitals provided very useful information on food science to promote healthy eating besides demonstrating ways to prepare healthy meals.

“We also arranged for our volunteers to be trained as Diabetes Ambassadors with relevant knowledge to guide seniors under their charge. Our team members also sourced art and craft instructors for batik painting and recycling projects, besides engaging specialists to impart gardening and flower arrangement skills to our members,” she added.

The vast resources enabled this group of dynamic volunteers to plan a term of 12 holistic weekly sessions. Each term of 12 weeks was followed by a break which allowed volunteers to plan upcoming activities and refresh their skills through training.

Gurdwara	Participants	Volunteers
Central Sikh Temple	107	12
Silat Road Sikh Temple	89	8
Yishun Sikh Temple	30	5
Total	226	25



Mdm Charanjeet Kaur  
Programme Coordinator.



| First Aid Training Course for the volunteers of Sunehri Sahelian and Sunehry Pal.



| Batam day trip organised by Sunehri Sahelian volunteers.





| The first participants were 30 female seniors above 70 years old.



| Sunehri Sahelian first activity session in 2014.

SIWEC's first Sunehri Sahelian (Golden Friends) Group was formed in September 2014. The initial group of 20 senior ladies and 10 volunteers had their first session in Central Sikh Temple in Towner Road. Little did they realise that the group would mushroom by 2020 and grow to attract 95 senior ladies!

The successful pilot at Central Sikh Temple spurred the enthusiasm to form a mixed group at the Sikh Centre at Silat Road Sikh Temple in Bukit Merah. In 2015 we started the Sunehray Pal (Golden Moments) group with 27 participants and 3 volunteers. By 2020, the group had grown to 81 participants and 8 volunteers.

In 2018, the core volunteer team assisted Yishun Gurdwara to start the Yishun Sunehray Pal group, which attracted 25 participants and 5 volunteers.



The initial success of the programme at Towner Road provided the confidence to start a second group at Silat Road Sikh Temple in early 2015, with a mixed group called Sunehray Pal (Golden Moments), comprising men and women. Activities were held fortnightly. Aside from organising talks, movie shows and outings, seniors were also engaged in arts and craft activities where they got to make handicrafts such as photo frames, crochet work and batik painting.



*Sunehray Pal participants exercising at Level 7, Sikh Centre.*



*Members of Sunehray Pal took to art & craft very well.*



*Sunehri Sahelian group activity at level 4 of CST in 2019.*



*Singapore Heart Foundation session on healthy eating.*



*Sunehri Sahelian participants using thera-bands to stretch and build muscle strength.*





| Happy seniors celebrate Singapore's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in August 2015.

Mrs Sarjit Khosa recalls, "With concerted outreach by our volunteers and word-of-mouth referrals by the pioneer group of participants, we faced a happy situation by the end of 2018 — the number of participants stood at 111 and 84 for women and men respectively! While we were overjoyed, we had to pause further enrolment — as we had simply run out of space and could not accommodate more members."



| 22 March 2016 — "The session at SCDF where we learnt how to deal with fires was eye opening." Swinder Kaur



| Drumming session at Kallang Community Club in July 2018.



| A joyful laughter yoga session by Mr Madan Kataria at Sikh Centre, in July 2019.





| Colouring sessions.

The range of activities expanded over time to include talks on Sikhi, health talks on conditions such as dementia, arthritis, and awareness sessions on government schemes such as for the pioneer generation when it was first announced, and on the usefulness as well as the process of completing the lasting power of attorney (LPA). Other activities which the seniors enjoyed were watching movies at local cinemas, as well as outings to various places of interest in Singapore, Malaysia and Batam/Bintan.



| Laughter Yoga at Silat Road, Sikh Centre.



| Outing to Sentosa, including Madame Tussauds ...



| ... and the Merlion.



Besides visiting popular tourist attractions in Singapore such as Universal Studios, Madame Tussauds, the Indian Heritage Centre and Gardens by the Bay, our seniors have also ventured abroad to Batam, Bintan and Malaysia.



| *At Gardens by the Bay.*



| *At Botanical Gardens.*



| *Sports and games — Outing to Port Dickson, Malaysia in October 2018.*



| *Bintan outing in October 2019.*







| Batam outing in August 2019.

## Community Involvement

Paying it forward the Sunehri Sahelian way. Sunehri Sahelian joined the national effort to celebrate Singapore's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015 by making hundreds of flowers from recycled plastic bags.

The flowers adorned the skirts of the Chingay 2015 participants in the picture below.



| Our ladies learnt a new skill while exercising their fine motor skills.

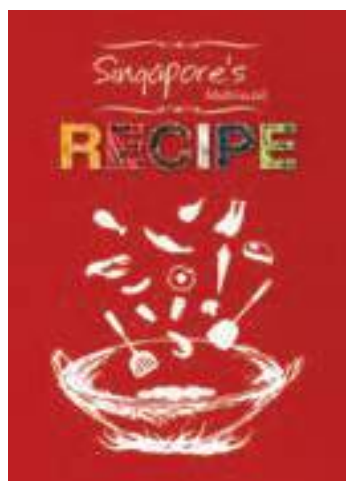


## Giving Back to the Community

In addition to learning new skills, participants were also trained by “skilled volunteers” in the art of pedee making. The pedees were then sold together with what the ladies made, with proceeds donated to SIWEC and selected social service agencies such as the Jamiyah Home for the Aged.



Members of the seniors group made pedees and created batik art. Their craft work was sold to raise funds for charity-run homes.



Mdm Amar Kaur, an active member of the Sunehri Sahaliaan group, made her peers proud by sharing her authentic homemade recipes which were included in Singapore's Multicultural Recipe book. Volunteer leader Mrs Charanjeet Kaur with Mdm Amar at the Self-Help Groups Joint Tuition Award Ceremony held at ITE College Central, officiated by Mr S Iswaran, then Minister for Communications and Information.



**Success Factors** — As to what explains the programme's success, Mrs Sarjit proudly proclaimed, "Our volunteer team's resourcefulness and creativity is definitely the most significant success factor. Our volunteers are all so cheerful, outgoing and highly motivated to engage and interact with our older seniors. Over time, the organising team has grown from 10 to 25 ladies. They in turn, are all very inspired by how the seniors have embraced every activity wholeheartedly.

"The second and equally important success factor has been the enthusiasm with which our seniors have embraced trying out and learning new things. They have clearly enjoyed outings to places they would otherwise never have visited. Some seniors who were initially quite reserved have notably become more confident and outgoing, motivated to improve their health and learn to better care for themselves."

*Mrs Sarjit proudly proclaimed, "Our volunteer team's resourcefulness and creativity is definitely the most significant success factor. Our volunteers are all so cheerful, outgoing and highly motivated to engage and interact with our older seniors. Over time, the organising team has grown from 10 to 25 ladies. They in turn, are all very inspired by how the seniors have embraced every activity wholeheartedly.*

*"Our aspiration is for the SS & SP movement to provide a joyful sanctuary for all our active seniors to continue to nurture friendships and mutually support each other, to learn and experience new things together, and share cherished memories well into their golden years," Mrs Sarjit Khosa reflects.*



| Community Engagement at Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital — National Day 2019.

## Visit by Parliamentary Secretary (Health & Home Affairs) Mr Amrin Amin to SIWEC in May 2018



Volunteer leaders showing Mr Amrin Amin craftwork made by some of the Sunehri Sahelian and Sunehray Pal participants.



Programme Volunteers with Mr Amrin Amin.



Community leaders thanked Mr Amrin Amin for his visit with a token of appreciation.



**Impact of Covid-19 on Seniors' Activities** — In 2020, due to the vulnerability of our seniors to Covid-19, all on-site activities were largely curtailed after the circuit breaker was declared. However, our volunteers engaged members via phone to check on their well-being besides sending exercise and positive mental-health videos via their social media chat-groups. This helped to keep our beloved seniors engaged at home, while urging them to continue to stay active and to keep fit.

Meanwhile, the volunteers sourced various online courses to introduce smart phone training for members of Sunehri Sahelian and Sunehray Pal to become more digitally confident.



Active seniors continued exercising at home with exercise videos during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Smart phone training for seniors.





## Volunteers' Reflections

### — In Giving, We Receive

*On members' expectation & enthusiasm* Whether it was during our regular breaks or this Covid-19 unprecedented break, whenever I meet our seniors, "When is our 'school' starting?" is a testament to the programme's success. It melts my heart to see them happy and I look forward to the sessions. Interacting with them has made me appreciate and empathise with them.



**Satwant**

*Their conversations about loneliness, hearing loss, aches and pains have taken on a whole new dimension. They have opened a window for me to see a future reality, that one day I too will be in their position. They have woken me up. They are the true teachers in this school. I thank them from the bottom of my heart.*



**Jheet**

*With the children away and time on my hands, I grabbed the golden opportunity to offer my services. It's to be active and connected with seniors in the community. For me, it is a pleasure to be in touch with our Punjabi seniors. I gained useful benefits through the health talks, exercises, and various active ageing programmes.*



**Anita**

*When I first joined, I honestly thought that I will be helping the elderly but instead I benefited so much from their sharing of their life experiences. The exercise sessions, talks by respective doctors and professionals were both interesting and useful to our daily living. The changes we need to make for healthy and happy living in spite of the problems that come with aging. The classes were not only for a healthy body but also for a healthy mind. There were inspiring talks by our Giani Gurdeep Ji on Gurbani perspective of living our lives in accordance with the Hukum (Divine Will) of Waheguru Ji. I am blessed to be part of the volunteer team.*



**Herwinder**

*I was in the midst of looking out for contributing some time to society after my Mum left us, when I was offered this opportunity to serve our Sikh seniors. I am able to serve and learn with the seniors and it is such a joy seeing smiles on the faces of our seniors. We give them joy and happiness and take back happiness at the end of each session. Our participants are missing us and the sessions since we were compelled to stop and keep in touch virtually via phones during Covid-19.*



**Kamaljeet**

*The majority of the Sunehri Sahelian ladies were Punjabi-literate. As a pioneer member of Sunehri Sahelian, my contribution was in interpreting into Punjabi the talks by various experts, commentaries during field trips of fun and exploration of Singapore history, factory tours, art and craft workshops and tips shared by expert physical trainers. It gives me great internal satisfaction in knowing that the essence of all content was being understood well and enriched their lives. I feel very grateful to Waheguru Ji for blessing me with this opportunity to be a part of the lives of these sweet, talented, loving ladies and benefit from their love, affection and sharing. Just seeing them blossom from shy, dependent with many health issues into cheerful, chatty, independent, and physically stronger and empowered ladies gives me great joy.*



**Parmjit**

*I always had a keen interest to volunteer my services for a good cause. When the opportunity came by with Sunehri Sahelian, it was a graceful way to fulfil the desire to stay active, healthy and connected to community. I have gained a lot of knowledge through health talks, exercises, active ageing programmes and awareness of senior-related schemes. As it is, ageing comes with various challenges. Volunteering with this programme, interacting with the seniors, and understanding some of their issues, enables me to turn these experiences into a learning process for my journey ahead.*

## Testimonial



**Dalip Kaur**

*"The facilitators are caring, patient, supportive and do not judge us. They put in effort to know all members and their leaders. Members are allotted groups and leaders are responsible for calling them to remind them of classes as well as to check on their well-being. They put us at ease, cater to our needs and make a point to check on us through phone calls. Simple gestures, but it makes a lot of difference."*

## Our Eldercare and Active Ageing Volunteers

Amar Kaur	KS Amarjit Singh Bal (Mrs)
Anita Sindhi	Narjen Kaur
Balbir Kaur	Parmjeet Kaur
Bhupinder Singh	Parmjit Kaur
Gurmeet Kaur	Pergas Kaur
Gulwant Kaur	Pritam Kaur
Harjinder Singh	Rajwant Kaur
Harjit Kaur	Satwant Kaur Khaira
Herwinder Kaur	Sarjit Kaur
Jasbir Kaur	Sarjit Kaur Khosa
Jheet Kaur	Simran Kaur
Kamaljeet Kaur Toor	

# Healthcare

The main focus of the healthcare programme is to provide social, emotional, and psychological support to patients in hospitals, long-term residents in nursing and disability homes, as well as vulnerable seniors living alone in their own homes. Where practical, we periodically arrange for these clients to enjoy packed meals of Punjabi food prepared in Gurdwara or from volunteers' homes.

When the programme commenced in early 1996, the main focus was on visiting patients in hospitals and a few nursing homes and institutions for the disabled. Visits were conducted by SIWEC's welfare officers who were ably assisted by a pool of stalwart volunteers. Mr Jasbir S Suropada recounted the active contribution of pioneer SIWEC volunteers who assisted from the onset, "I recall fondly the early contribution of Mr Harmit Singh, Ms Gurmit Kaur, Ms Paramjit Kaur and the late Ms Sukhpreet Kaur, all of whom devoted precious personal time to undertake Sewa."

## **SIWEC Clinic and Medical Support Programme (2005)**

*"Dr Amar Kaur (then Head of ENT at Toa Payoh Hospital) led the project but unfortunately passed away prior to the launch of the clinic. The clinic was subsequently named Dr Amar Kaur Memorial Clinic. Free medical screening was provided by volunteer nurses and doctors. The clinic was based in Central Sikh Temple but also rotated its services to other Gurdwaras. Nursing sister Harjit Kaur coordinated the group of volunteer nurses," SIWEC pioneer welfare officer Mr Jasbir S Suropada recounted.*

*Then SIWEC Chairman Dr Sorinder Singh named the clinic after Dr Amar Kaur to honour her memory and zeal to see the project succeed.*

*Dr Sorinder Singh elaborated, "I was keen to honour her vision and her legacy of Sewa, so I committed to licensing the clinic in my name. Although SIWEC had by then secured the support of more Sikh volunteer doctors keen to volunteer their time, response to the clinic was quite poor, possibly due to insufficient publicity and outreach. Doctors would be present, with little or no patients turning up at times. Eventually, the clinic stopped operating at Central Sikh Temple in 2009, after major building upgrade and renovations commenced there."*

*It was an initiative with much potential impact, but it subsequently became an unproductive use of the volunteer doctors' valuable time. After the renovations at CST, the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board decided to move the clinic to Sikh Centre, Silat Road. A few years later, it was decided to discontinue the clinic in view of the consistently poor uptake.*

*Dr Sorinder remains keen to establish a free clinic serving the community from an accessible location such as Towner Road or Silat Road, whenever it becomes feasible. He is confident that like-minded medical practitioners would rise to the call to serve in a community-based outreach medical service in future.*



Since 2009, the effort to leverage fully on the network of Sikh nurses as volunteers to conduct hospital visits was helmed by Mdm Sarjit Kaur Gill, a retired nurse. She was co-opted as a member of the SIWEC management committee by then Chairman Mr JJ Sekhon, serving three terms. Mdm Sarjit managed SIWEC's hospital visits and healthcare programmes working closely with Mr JJ and SIWEC's welfare officers. She harnessed contacts with fellow Sikh nurses across the hospital network to alert SIWEC whenever a Sikh individual was hospitalised.

Between 2009 and the end of 2012, the number of annual visits SIWEC made to patients increased more than four-fold. The reality prompted SIWEC into hiring a part-time staff to respond decisively to an area of evident need.

In September 2013, SIWEC decided to hire a Healthcare Ambassador on a part-time basis, to conduct more frequent visits to seniors in hospitals, in disability and nursing homes, as well as those who were home-bound with limited or no family support.

Beneficiaries of the programme were cheered and looked forward to her every visit.

A review of the visit frequency per client over the next 3 years prompted SIWEC to commit more funds to engage our then part-time staff Mdm Kartar Kaur on a full-time basis since January 2017. This decision helped increase face-to-face time with every client on our growing visit-list. The value and impact of the service is not quantifiable. The feedback and warm reactions of those we serve have affirmed that it was the right decision.



*Mdm Sarjit Kaur was active on many fronts. Besides hospital visits, she also provided safety cover for charity cycle rides in Malaysia in 2014 & 2015.*

*Volunteerism knows no age boundaries and by the time you get to the end of this feature story, there is a pretty high chance that you will agree with this mantra as well.*

*Here is one volunteer from our own community who reminds us that it is not just the young that can contribute to the wider society.*

*Meet Mdm Sarjit Kaur, a 71-year-old retired nurse who is an inspiration to many for her tireless and courageous dedication to the community through her volunteer efforts with SIWEC. Mdm Sarjit started off helping at SIWEC through multiple platforms, and continues to do so, but is now responsible for the welfare organisation's hospitalisation and health programmes.*

*This entails her volunteering her services to patients who are admitted in hospitals and nursing homes, where her role is to provide additional support. In addition, volunteering to help with the community's healthcare needs also sees her provide counselling, medical screening for blood sugar and high-blood pressure as well as help providing healthcare advice at SIWEC's outreach booths at community events.*

*Being a retired nurse helps, of course, as it provides her with the required knowledge, aptitude, and attitude to fulfil this rather sensitive role. “Nursing is in my veins, maybe that is the inspiration (I need),” she said.*

*However, Mdm Sarjit, who is married to a retired senior police officer, goes beyond the basics. She even visits patients at home after they have been discharged to lend emotional support in helping them recover better and to ensure that they are not alone as she acknowledges that being an effective medical volunteer requires “heart” as well.*

*On occasions, she has had to help mend broken ties within families so that patients get family support and care, while on other occasions Mdm Sarjit has been called to provide medical support to elderly patients where their families do not do so.*

*With an ageing population though, the healthcare needs of the community are increasing more rapidly, and this makes Mdm Sarjit’s role even more important. For instance,*

*from 2009–2010, she was called upon to make 22 hospital visits — amounting to one visit every fortnight. This frequency increased to one visit every 10 days the following year and to weekly visits in 2011–2012. However, from July 2012 to June 2013, Mdm Sarjit had been visiting patients in hospitals once every four days, amounting to 92 visits over 12 months. This was more than four times more than when she started out in 2009.*

*Mdm Sarjit acknowledges that this trend could lead to volunteer fatigue especially when it comes to caregiving for longer-term patients, which requires sustained visits over a period of time. She looks forward to some helping hands from the community as she notes that it has been challenging to get people to step forward.*

*“Volunteers are not too forthcoming due to family commitments while most are also working — so they feel that there is no time left to volunteer,” she said in despair.*

*But she feels that there is a lot more that the community can do to help, especially when it comes to younger volunteers so there is a need to engage the youth and create a greater awareness among them of these needs and problems within the community.*

*Having said that though, she believes that anyone — young or otherwise could be a volunteer and lend a helping hand to the community.*

*Who better to highlight that than her? Here is someone who walks the talk.*

**Extract from SIWEC Insight Newsletter, July–September 2013**



Mdm Sarjit Kaur  
to the rescue.



Healthcare Ambassador Mdm Kartar Kaur and SIWEC Manager Ranjit Singh regularly visit residents in long-term care facilities.



Over the past decade, the SIWEC staff stepped up their networking outreach to identify more Sikhs in intermediate and long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, welfare homes, destitute homes, and residential homes for the destitute, mentally incapacitated and those with disability. The team also actively tracked isolated and vulnerable Sikh seniors living alone without family support, to assess their support needs and have our healthcare ambassador engage them periodically.

We currently support 40 individuals aged between 54 and 90 residing in various nursing and welfare homes across Singapore, as well as 11 seniors living mostly alone in their own homes. In 2019, Mdm Kartar and the SIWEC team together clocked a total of 765 visits, where each client was visited at least once a month. In 2020, the number of visits and video/voice calls surged to 826.

## Befriending Visits

Our Healthcare Ambassador makes about 8 to 10 monthly visits to patients in various hospitals and

seniors' homes in Singapore. Each visit lasts 30 to 40 minutes. When Mdm Kartar visits those in intensive care or the terminally ill, spiritual prayer support is provided to those going for major surgery. Our staff also respond to requests by families of terminally ill patients to help arrange for spiritual support.

Besides psychological support, SIWEC also provides practical guidance to financially challenged patients to access subsidies by connecting them with medical social workers to secure transport allowance for post-discharge therapy, or to clear outstanding hospitalisation bills.



Mdm Kartar with Ms Sarina Kaur.

## Testimonial

*"I want to thank SIWEC for visiting me for the past 7 to 8 years. When I was in the hospital for many months, they visited me. It brought me joy and happiness to see them. Now that I am at home, they still visit me. Whenever they visit me, it feels great that someone still cares for me. I sincerely thank SIWEC and Aunty Kartar for visiting me."*

— Ms Sarina Kaur





*Mdm Kartar visiting  
Late Mdm Gurnam  
Kaur, a joyful resident  
at Society for the Aged.*

## Institutional Home Visits

We recognise the need to provide sustained psycho-emotional support to home-bound seniors living alone and those in institutions who are mostly isolated from the community due to illness, disability, or frailty in their old age. We schedule visits to these seniors so that they do not feel left out and forgotten by the community.

Mdm Kartar spends an average of one hour and visits each client at least twice a month. She always brings along Punjabi meals which are not served at the institutions where they reside.

She said “These visits are now monthly highlights for these lonely souls whose day is brightened with the parshad, langgar, conversation and companionship from our visits.



*SIWEC Manager Ranjit Singh with CSGB President  
Baljit Singh visiting Mr Ishwar Lal Singh at Sree  
Narayana Mission Home.*

*“A very uplifting visit! Whenever  
you visit, I feel there is ONE GOD  
FOR ALL and he cares for us  
through sister Kartar Kaur and  
the SIWEC staff: Shabash Ji.”*

*— Ishwar Lal*

Healthcare Support	No. of Residents	Befriending and Institutional Home Visits					
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Institutions	37	206	192	447	437	514	95
Residences	13	38	68	117	135	144	67
Hospitals		56	57	127	87	107	7
Tele – visits							657 <sup>1</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>826</b>
<b>Average per month</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>69</b>

## Interview with Our Full-Time Ambassador Mdm Kartar Kaur & SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit Singh

*Healthcare Ambassador Mdm Kartar reflected “Some of these seniors have little or no family support, while others seldom receive any visits.”*

*Mr Ranjit notes, “She chats and listens to them and enquires about their needs, and even helps them to get it for them. She also informs them about various programmes in the Gurdwaras. For those who are able and keen to attend Gurdwara, she will arrange such visits and, in some cases, even provide them with lunch. “*

*In 2018, just before Vesakhi, 30 seniors on SIWEC’s Home Visit programme received Gurbani radios donated by Central Sikh Gurdwara Board. According to Mdm Kartar, the Healthcare Ambassador, “The seniors were overjoyed and so grateful to receive the Gurbani radios. It is our hope that by listening to Bani & Kirtan daily, it will help uplift their spirits daily and connect them to Waheguru-ji, whilst adding meaning to their lives.”*

*The daughter of Mdm Ranjit Kaur, who receives regular visits from SIWEC expressed, “Thank you so much for the lovely present for my mum. This is exactly what she needs. She really enjoys listening to it now. Whoever thought of this is brilliant!”*

*Mr Ranjit added: “Mdm Kartar literally brings divine blessings in the form of parshad and Punjabi vegetarian dishes, cooked and packed*

*from the Gurdwara, for these individuals who seldom have the opportunity to consume Punjabi food or visit the Gurdwara due to their condition.”*

### Covid-19 Impact

*In 2020, after the circuit breaker was implemented, our visits were suspended between April and June. However, Mdm Kartar kept in touch with most seniors via tele-visits in the form of voice and video calls to engage them, enquire into their well-being and keep their morale high. Those needing meals continued to receive them from the Gurdwaras. By the latter part of 2020, face-to-face visits to our senior clients had gradually resumed.*

*Looking ahead, SIWEC believes that in order to continue to reach out and serve more members of our community on a sustained basis, we will have to rely on updates from our community partners in the intermediate and long-term care sector, as well as the sangat from our network of Gurdwaras and members of the wider community. Working together as a close-knit community network, we can and must continue to support our isolated, often lonely seniors who have limited or no sources of emotional support. We must continue to do as much as we can, to motivate them and help add meaning and purpose to their lives.*

**Extract from SIWEC Insight Newsletter, 2020**



Video calling during Covid-19 restrictions.

## Outings to Gurdwaras and Major Events

The SIWEC team also arranges to bring seniors residing in institutions who are fairly ambulant, to the nearest Gurdwara during special occasions like Vesakhi or Gurpurab, and to attend major events like Naam Ras. Such occasions when these otherwise isolated seniors are able to participate with the sangat in Kirtan and Ardas are truly balm for their souls.

SIWEC clients from various institutional homes were brought to Naam Ras 2018 at the Singapore Expo to personally experience Kirtan Darbar. They had a memorable experience at one of the largest Sikh community gatherings in Southeast Asia. The group expressed their appreciation of the efforts put in by SIWEC and Naam Ras volunteers to enable them to pray among the sangat and consume langar in a unique setting.



*Residents and staff from the Society for the Aged Sick at the Max Pavilion (Singapore Expo) attending Naam Ras in December 2018.*



*SIWEC Manager Ranjit Singh and Mdm Kartar Kaur with residents and staff from the Society for the Aged Sick, at CST during Vesakhi celebrations.*





## Orthopaedic Clinic for Seniors (2017–2019)



| Dr Gurpal Singh

*In 2017, Dr Gurpal Singh, an orthopaedic specialist with the National University Hospital approached CSGB and SIWEC and offered to conduct orthopaedic clinics for seniors at the Gurdwaras, in his personal capacity, outside of his working hours at the hospital. At CST for example, the monthly clinics normally commence after the weekly Sunheri Sahelian sessions.*

*A Conversation with Dr Gurpal Singh, who runs an orthopaedic clinic for seniors and conducts regular talks at Central Sikh Temple, Silat Road Temple, Khalsa Dharmak Sabha, and Yishun Gurdwara.*

### **Please elaborate on how your clinic got started, how it works, and how it serves Sikh seniors.**

*It is quite serendipitous how things all fell into place soon after I shared my desire to do something practical yet impactful for the Sikh community. I was contacted by the team of lady volunteers who run Sunehri Sahelian & Sunehray Pal. They invited me to deliver awareness talks on bone health and arthritis at Central Sikh Temple and Silat Road for their members. Many of the seniors who attended appreciated hearing about the condition and its management, explained and simplified in Punjabi for them to easily understand.*

*I would set aside a couple of Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons every month, when I am on leave from my work, to run the consultation sessions at one of the three Gurdwaras. The team that coordinates these clinics are the dynamic volunteers who run Sunehri Sahelian and Sunehray Pal. The team of volunteers is so dedicated and has been such a blessing. They do the outreach to identify seniors with aches and pains and urge them to turn up for the clinics at one of the Gurdwaras. They also take notes and arrange for the seniors to get X-rays done at the clinic next door to Central Sikh Temple. I review these X-rays at their next consultation.*

### **How have the clinics made a significant impact?**

*In most of the cases I have seen, I prescribe relevant exercises and urge them to remain active as far as possible. There are at least five to six serious cases that I have followed-up and treated at the Orthopaedic Specialist Clinic, including seeing them through to surgery and rehabilitation. They are all doing rather well now.*

**What has been the most fulfilling aspect of volunteering your time in this way?**

*Honestly, I derive a high degree of fulfilment from running these community clinics outside of the hospital environment. In the cases I highlighted, I have had the opportunity to make a difference in enhancing the quality of life of people who had been suffering pains prior to their appropriate diagnosis and treatment. None of this would have been possible without Guruji's blessings. To be able to do this seva is a huge blessing by itself.*

**Do you have any suggestions on how more Sikh healthcare professionals can come together to impact seniors in our community?**

*I am considering forming a group of like-minded doctors and nurses who have indicated an interest to be involved in community outreach work beyond the hospital setting. I look forward to realising that, hopefully in the not too distant future.*

**Extract from SIWEC Insight Newsletter, 2017**



**Our Healthcare Volunteers**

Late Dr Amar Kaur	M Kowsula Kaur	Late Sukhpreet Kaur
Dr Gurpal Singh	Paramjit Kaur	Dr Trishpal Kaur
Gurmit Kaur	Parveen Kaur Ghosal	
Harmit Singh Gandhi	Sarjit Kaur	

## Bereavement

Bereavement support was one of the first services that SIWEC provided since its inception. Mr Jasbir S Suropada recalls the pioneer volunteers he worked with in the early days: “The late Dilvinderjeet Singh (DJ), Manjit Singh, Dev, Charanjit Singh, Hardial Singh and Madan Mohan Singh were there from the onset.” Most of these pioneers have continued this sacred Sewa to the present day.

Mr Gurdip Singh Usma reflects, “Today, our bereavement service is the most visible and cherished service provided to members of the Sikh Sangat (community) residing in Singapore by SIWEC.”

After SIWEC attained IPC status, as welfare programmes took on a more secular and inclusive approach, the financial accounts for the bereavement support service were managed separately from accounts for general welfare activities, as the bereavement service benefits only members of the Sikh faith.

With financial support from all the Sikh Gurdwaras, SIWEC acquired a community hearse at highly subsidised rates. The Sikh community hearse is driven only by a few trusted and highly committed volunteers who have undergone training and familiarisation.

Almost every Sikh death in Singapore is supported by SIWEC staff, ably assisted by dedicated volunteers who are on call at very short notice. The number of cremations supported by SIWEC has risen significantly over the decades. From between 50 and 60 deaths a year two decades back, SIWEC now supports between 80-90 family bereavements annually. In 2019, the team supported



*The SIWEC staff team dealing with bereavements is led by SIWEC manager Mr Ranjit Singh who is assisted by Mr Baldev Singh, Mdm Kartar Kaur (sitting left) & Ms Jaspreet Kaur (sitting right). They work with devoted volunteers such as Mr Karam Singh (standing middle), Mr Surinder (standing left) & Mdm Baljinder Kaur (sitting in the middle) to support bereaved families.*

87 bereavements while in 2020, there was a slight increase to 91 deaths.

In exceptions, when two or more deaths occur around the same time and the community hearse is only able to support one family, we refer other families to reliable undertakers familiar with Sikh funeral requirements who provide a hearse at a discounted price.

*Today, our bereavement service is the most visible and cherished service provided to members of the Sikh Sangat (community) residing in Singapore by SIWEC.*

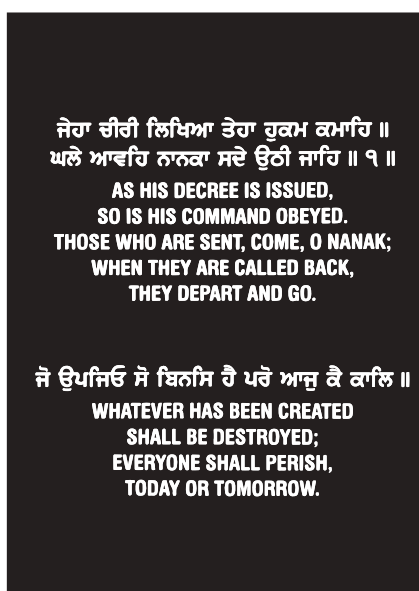
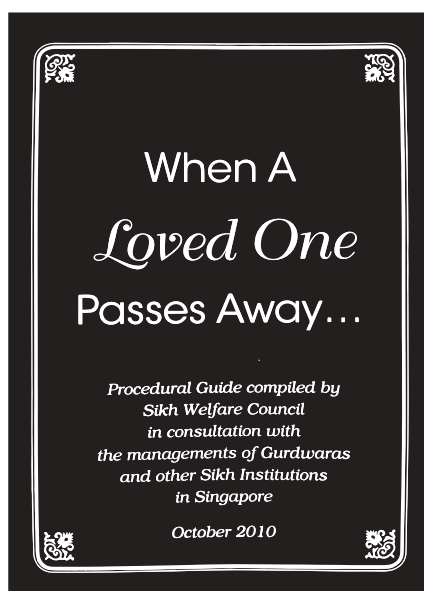
— Gurdip Singh Usma



## Bereavement Support Process

SIWEC staff would normally invite family members to our office at the Central Sikh Temple to be briefed on the arrangements. This is sometimes done via the phone, if family members are not able to come to the SIWEC office. The conversation involves discussion on body washing or embalming arrangements, cremation slot bookings, placement of obituary notices, coffin and hearse bookings, transport arrangements and items to be purchased for the cremation.

Two reference documents; a detailed process checklist and a procedural guidebook on bereavements, are provided to the family. Both are also available for download from the SIWEC website. Mr Ranjit Singh, Manager of SIWEC, explains: “We seek to set the families’ minds at ease by providing a comprehensive checklist with contact numbers and addresses of all the agencies or suppliers of materials required for a Sikh funeral.”

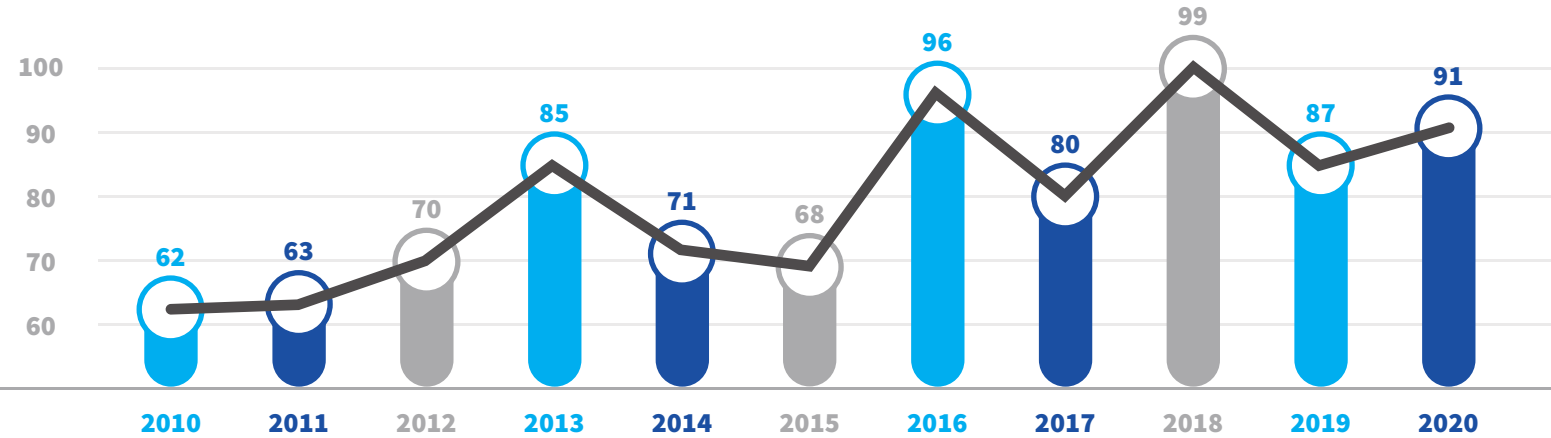


Funerals are sombre affairs for the bereaved family dealing with grief at the loss of a loved one. We are indebted to our dedicated volunteers who respond at short notice to perform selfless Sewa when a fellow Sikh passes on. Our staff will contact available volunteers to assist with driving the hearse, facilitate the body-washing process at the mortuary, and coordinate arrangements for the cremation service at Mandai crematorium. In cases where the family has insufficient people or are too traumatised to perform the body-washing duties, SIWEC staff will rally volunteers to step forward and assist. The family coordinates with available Sikh priests at their affiliated Gurdwara on timings for transport (buses) to Mandai crematorium, and for remains collection and ash dispersal the following morning.

SIWEC also helps by providing advice to families and employers of non-resident Sikhs who pass away while visiting Singapore or while working here. SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit elaborates: “In such instances, we help to coordinate with registered casket companies for repatriations, as they are licensed to obtain a permit to send the remains out from Singapore, or to receive remains returned from overseas.”

In unique instances, SIWEC also extends bereavement support to Sikh converts. However, documentary proof of conversion, such as confirmation that Singh or Kaur is reflected in their identity documents, is required. Mr Ranjit shares: “We have had instances where families requested for funerals to be performed in accordance with Sikhi rites, where the deceased had failed to register his Sikh name in the identity document after having undergone the Amrit ceremony a few years earlier. This omission caused a delay in the cremation, as well as added cost and anguish to the family.”

Annual Number of Bereavements



With about 90 cremations per year, our staff and volunteers are on the average handling a funeral once every 4 days or twice per week. Notably, once in a while, we have supported three funerals in a day.

Analysis of Cause of Death

Cause	2020	2019
Cancer	5	13
Heart Disease	31	32
Pheumonia	20	25
Accident/Injury	6	2
Other Factors	29	15
Total	91	87

Heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death amongst the Sikhs.

Analysis of Age at Death

Age	2020	2019
Up to 40 years	2	4
41 to 60 years	10	17
61 to 70 years	19	18
71 to 80 years	16	15
81 to 90 years	33	22
Over 91 years	11	11
Total	91	87
Male Average	73	68
Female Average	80	79
Overall	76	73

While the male-female differential in the life expectancy amongst Sikhs is in line with the national trend (where females outlive males by about 8 years), the absolute life expectancy of Sikhs in 2019 and 2020 is below the national average by between 5–7 years.

## Complimentary Obituary Communication Service

In 2018, SIWEC initiated a complimentary Obituary Communication Service via our website to registered mobile phone users. This service is intended to lighten the financial burden of bereaved families on costly obituary placements in the newspapers while providing an effective and prompt method to communicate cremation details directly to friends and relatives via text messaging applications such as WhatsApp or Telegram.

We have publicised the service to members of the sangat who can sign up to receive timely notice of all Sikh bereavements in Singapore that are known to us. Presently, our contact list includes over 200 subscribers.





## Live Streaming of Funerals

In 2020, SIWEC introduced a live-streaming service for cremations at Mandai. This was after the circuit breaker was imposed nationwide, as part of Covid-19 mitigation measures limited the attendance at funerals to only 10 persons. Live streaming was initially fully funded as a community service between the months of May and June 2020.

Although the number of attendees allowed at funerals increased from 10 in April to 20 in July and 30 in August, the restriction remained a limiting factor for friends and relatives who wanted to bid farewell in-person.

Since July 2020, SIWEC has continued to offer live streaming as an option for all bereaved families, at a lowered cost of \$400. The service has been well-utilised as Covid-19 restrictions on crowd sizes and travel prevent those overseas from returning to Singapore at short notice to be physically present to send off their loved ones on their final journey.

SIWEC operates a 24-hour hotline manned by a welfare officer. Our staff members stand ready to provide the bereaved family with social, emotional, spiritual and financial support (if required). During the bereavement, the SIWEC representative will assist the family with cremation arrangements, provide guidance on the ceremonial aspects, and clarify doubts regarding conduct of the final rites for the deceased.



| *Live-Streaming in progress.*



## When a loved one passes away

(A Sikh family reflects on dealing with the death of a loved one)

### How prepared was the whole family for your loved one's passing?

*In my observation, death is still invariably a taboo subject in the Sikh community and is rarely discussed openly. Even though the younger generation may be open to broaching the topic, out of respect for the elders, the topic is seldom addressed and discussed for and with one's own parents. However, my father-in-law had not only given it thought but also penned it down and shared it when he was in his 60s. He got the family together and shared with them details of how he would want his funeral arrangements done, suggesting who he wanted to be involved, along with their contact numbers, and specifying details of other matters relating to the Sikh funeral rites. The topic of death wasn't discussed frequently but my father-in-law's wishes on the arrangements were expressed clearly to the family members. This minimised confusion when the time came.*

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਮਹਾਲਿਹ ਪੰਥੁ ਨਿਹਾਲਿਹ ਅਸਾ ਭਿ ਓਥੈ ਜਾਣਾ ॥

*Saahib Samhaalih Panthh Nihaalih Asaa Bh Outhhai Jaanaa II*

*Let us remember the Lord and Master in contemplation and keep a watchful eye on the Path. We shall have to go there as well.*

### How did you go about fulfilling your loved one's wishes on funeral arrangements including the post-cremation prayers?

*When my father-in-law passed away, we all experienced a sense of deep loss. However, the*

*family's grief was relieved somewhat as we had a 'roadmap' to follow, in accordance with his expressed wishes. We called SIWEC for assistance. Close friends and relatives were informed. It was my father-in-law's wish to be cremated the same day if possible, and we were able to fulfil his instructions. Post-cremation Paath (prayers) was done by the family members and close friends in the form of Sehaj Paath in the Gurdwara sahib.*

### Did you face any confusion concerning what is essential for funerals in accordance with Sikh Maryada?

*Being a learned Sikh, my father-in-law was well acquainted with the Sikh Maryada (Sikh Code of Conduct) and had desired to strictly adhere to it, thereby doing away with insignificant ceremonial rituals. Despite that, a relative insisted on buying ghee while another well-meaning relative insisted on buying flowers for the pre-cremation proceedings.*

### What helped your family deal with their grief after your father-in-law's passing?

*The fact that family members and friends did Sehaj Paath together made a difference. A sense of comfort came from reading and understanding the Bani and reflecting on the significance of Guruji's message even as we struggled with our raw emotions after a close family member's passing.*

ਅੰਤੇ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਮੈ ਪਿ ਛੈ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਅਹੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਣੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

*Anthae Sathigur Boliaa Mai Pishhai Keerathan Kariahu Nirabaan Jeeo II*

*Finally, the True Guru said: "When I am gone, sing Kirtan in Praise of the Lord, in Nirvaanaa."*

*The Gianiji and members of the gurdwara jatha were at hand, guiding and speaking to us. This provided us a sense of solace too. In addition, the mental preparedness of what to do in accepting Waheguru's will made coping with the departure of the senior member of the family easier to eventually embrace.*

**What have you learnt most from the experience, both individually and as a family?**

*Death is inevitable. Yet, family members will naturally be in a quandary immediately after the loss of a loved one. As Sikhs, we are called to accept that it is Waheguru's will — sukh dukh sam kar jaaneeye. Personally, we acknowledge that it is best to be proactive in preparing for a death in the family, openly discussing the way one would like to be sent 'Home.' Setting one's wishes in order helps to uncomplicate the funeral procedure and gives the bereaved family a sense of 'one issue less to worry about.'*

*Such clarity helps unify and comfort the family at the time when all family members are handling their individual emotions. There are many traditions and rituals associated with funeral arrangements which have come about with time. When a family is unfamiliar with Sikh Maryada guidelines, confusion results when well-meaning relatives insist on performing insignificant rituals. Some families give in when differing views arise on what is essential, performing ceremonies which are not in compliance with the pragmatism and simplicity espoused in Sikhi.*

**What advice would you offer to Sikh families who may be at a loss as to what to do when a loved one passes on?**

*However forbidden the subject of death may be, a discussion about it when one is still alive makes it easier for the whole family. In addition, the remaining members of the family are reassured that all that is being done is as per the wishes of the loved one, irrespective of what the social pressures may be.*

**Extract from SIWEC Insight Newsletter, September 2018**

**Our Bereavement Volunteers**

Avtar Singh Ghosal	Hardial Singh	Sarjit Kaur Gill
Baljinder Kaur	Karam Singh Rode	Surinder Singh (CJ)
Gurmeet Kaur	Madan Mohan Singh	
Harbahjan Singh Ghosal	Manjit Singh Sevea	



## THANK YOU NOTES FROM FAMILIES through the years:

### Tribute to the Sikh Welfare Council

One of the saddest moments in our lives was the passing of our beloved mother/grandmother, Bebeji Gian Kaur, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January this year. We knew she was blessed with an additional 3-plus years after she was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2004. The extra three years, where she returned to normal life, had more than prepared all of us for her eventual passing on. But, when the moment actually came, we were still lost. In the end it was no different from just like any other family's moment of grief and loss.

Most of us were just as lost as to what to do next. There was the expected support from members of the family and our close relatives, who helped bring some calm and understanding to the situation.

But thanks to the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC), especially to Jasbir Singh, our mother's transition from this world to the next was, hopefully, a smooth one and good one. His help came from within five minutes of her passing. I called Jasbir to help arrange the funeral. The words on the other side were some of the most consoling in my moment of need. "I am really sorry about your loss. Losing a parent is certainly a difficult time, for anyone. You need to be strong for your family and to be with them now," he said.

"You do not worry about anything. I will arrange everything. All I need from you is your mother's death certificate and the time you want to book the crematorium."

That was, indeed, all I had to do.

**Extract of testimony from Mr Santokh Singh Gruwel**

### Mrs Harbans Singh Dhaliwal & Family



Sikh Welfare Council 25th Nov 2019  
S'pore

Thank You Very Much  
Thank you for your understanding  
and support during this period.  
Special thanks to Ranjit Singh  
for providing all the support that  
was needed,  
Karam Singh (Rode)'s assistance  
& handling is much appreciated.  
To say the least, everyone involved  
did a splendid job.  
SIWEC - job well done!  
From Mrs Harbans Singh Dhaliwal  
and family

I just wanted to compliment Counsellor Baljinder Kaur who was very professional, knowledgeable, and understanding of the family's feelings. Even though she was a volunteer, she was aware of our feeling and really efficient in the way she got things done systematically. The whole process of bathing my Mom was done very gracefully and lovingly.

Thank you for having a wonderful counsellor like Mdm Baljinder Kaur. She is definitely someone that everyone would feel very comfortable with. It is the knowledge, expertise, and efficiency of these types of staff that helps us cope with difficult situations such as these.

In addition, I also found the driver (did not get his name) very efficient. He was very helpful and went out of his way to help us during the grieving process.

I also would like to thank your staff Mr Baldev Singh. He was very efficient and diligent in his work. His advice and guidance helped me through a difficult situation with my other family members. I would like to thank him for his professionalism and care during my stressful period.

**Balbir Singh and Rita Kaur.**  
**Son and Daughter-in-Law**  
**of the Late Mdm Mohinder Kaur**

# Prison Counselling & After-Care

The impetus to form a group of Sikh prison counsellors was catalysed in the early 1970s when it became apparent that the high incidence of drug addiction in Singapore increasingly affected members of the Sikh community as well. Twenty Sikhs from the education, healthcare and law-enforcement sector volunteered to help confront the social challenge. They attended the first para-counsellors course conducted at the Singapore Khalsa Association by the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA), with support from the then Ministry of Social Affairs.

The Chairman of the first SANA Sikh Counselling Service Committee was Mr Surjan Singh, an educationist. He served until 1980 when Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Mejar Singh Gill took over and served until 1996. Mr Mejar Singh recalls, “A function attended by Sikh community leaders was organised at Guillemard Camp for the graduation of the first group of volunteers. SANA Sikhs had numerous interactions with Ministry of Home Affairs and Prisons authorities to discuss the concerns of incarcerated Sikhs, especially on the issue of keeping unshorn hair and having access to Sikh prayer items. Over the years, we established a strong rapport with the

authorities and secured permission to serve Sikh inmates langgar and parshad after Simran, Kirtan and Ardas during two annual events; Vesakhi and Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s Gurpurab observance.”

Mr Mejar added, “In addition to counselling activities and visits to inmates at various detention centres, the SANA Sikh Counselling Service was actively involved with the Hindu Counselling Service in planning and setting up the Ashram at Sembawang. The Sikh community donated \$100,000 for the project. Since the Ashram was established in 1999, Gurdwara Yishun has been actively involved in providing langgar to the residents in recovery there, once a week.”

When SIWEC was established in 1995, its mandate included the urgency to augment the excellent work already being done by SANA Sikh counsellors and to work in parallel. As a result, two groups of Sikh volunteers performing similar Sewa for Sikh inmates functioned side by side for the best part of the next two decades; one group was coordinated by the pioneering SANA Sikhs, while the second group was recruited and managed by SIWEC’s senior welfare officer Mr Jasbir Singh Suropada.



**S Dalijeet Singh**



**S Gurpreet Singh**



**S Kashmir Singh**



**S Nirmal Singh**



**S Swaran Singh**

*First group of prison volunteers recruited by SIWEC and trained as counsellors to engage Sikh inmates.*

There was close interaction and mutual support between both groups to coordinate the outreach and counselling work and to minimise duplication. This helped to ensure that incarcerated Sikh inmates had access to Sikh counsellors at all the drug rehabilitation centres and different institutions, before the Singapore Prisons decided to centralise all inmates at its newly built complex at Changi.

Counsellors affiliated with SANA Sikhs were urged to continue their Sewa as members of one entity with SIWEC, in an effort to harness and deploy limited community resources more efficiently. After the decision was formalised with Prisons Headquarters in 2015, a full-time staff (Mr Baldev Singh) was hired to function as SIWEC’s primary liaison with Prisons, coordinating the access of personnel and clearance of materials for all Sikh religious counselling activities.

*Mr Jasbir reflected on his memorable time as a counsellor: “It was a rare God-sent opportunity to transform a life. For the very few who succeeded, I was elated every time, as it gave me renewed faith and motivation to continue the work to help more inmates to kick the drug habit, and to live up to their true potential in living meaningful lives. Some joined SIWEC as volunteers to provide spiritual and rehabilitative counselling to inmates in prisons and DRCs themselves. This was very powerful and effective as they were able to draw from the experience of their past lives to show that change was possible”.*

Between 2012 and 2015, as the Singapore Prisons centralised control over all detention facilities at Changi, it began standardising its procedures and streamlining communications with community stakeholders. The Sikh community leadership decided that Sikh counselling services should be

*SIWEC’s Vice-Chairman (Operations) Mr Manmohan Singh shared, “Presently, SIWEC has 18 active counsellors who conduct about 30 group counselling sessions per month in total. Two of our counsellors are female. We engage over 40 inmates who attend Sikh counselling on a weekly basis.*

*In the early 1990s, the total number of Sikh inmates was more than 100. While the lower number today reflects that many have reformed, one stark reality is the significant number of repeat offenders who have struggled to remain drug and crime-free after their release. They find themselves back behind bars within a year or more of their release. This reality guides SIWEC’s approach to devote more attention to aftercare support for released offenders”.*

harmonised under one umbrella fronted by SIWEC, to unify and align all the community’s communications with Prisons and engagement with the Ministry of Home Affairs, as well as other government agencies.

Prison Counselling Activities	
Inmates counselled	48
Aftercare beneficiaries	42
Counselling session per year	340
Prison Counselling Volunteers	18



## Honouring Our Long Serving Prison Volunteer Counsellors

**Reflections by Dr Kuldip S Wasan, 79, after receiving the Singapore Prison Service Gold award for 25 years of volunteer service.**

### **Our longest serving volunteer.**

*Asked how he felt on the evening of the awards ceremony, Dr Kuldip responded, “Honestly, I was quite surprised to receive the award for performing Sewa. Equally, I feel it is very nice to be acknowledged. I’m grateful for the efforts by Prisons to recognise volunteers.*

*Casting his mind back 25 years, Dr Kuldip confessed, “I held a rather simplistic view of drug addicts as being weak-willed persons who were not disciplined enough to control their cravings. I got frustrated in my early days, asking ‘what’s the difficult part in letting go of addiction? Surely something can be done?’ It took years of learning and reflection as a volunteer counsellor before I started to adopt a more enlightened humanistic approach towards the hard-core drug addicts. I must say I had difficulty fully empathising with them in my earlier years, both as doctor and as a counsellor.”*

*Dr Kuldip recalls, “Coincidentally, one of my earliest postings in the 1970s had prepared me to work with addicts against the context of a growing drug*



At the 2017 Singapore Prison Service Volunteers Awards, Dr Kuldip S Wasan was one of 16 volunteers recognised for 25 years of volunteer service.

*problem in Singapore in the late 1960s and the 70s. The Ministry of Health (MOH) posted me to work with early offenders at the drug treatment centre on St John's Island and at Alexandra Hospital."*

*Dr Kuldip reflects that MOH had also sent him to the United States on a solo study trip covering five cities over one month. "It was an excellent trip with rich insights from visiting drug rehabilitation centres and interacting with professionals in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Washington." He returned to continue his work at Alexandra Hospital with the early drug offenders until the mid-1970s when he was posted to assume a clinical role in a government polyclinic."*

*Almost two decades later in the 1990s, the by then middle-aged Dr Kuldip decided to join pioneer Sikh counsellors and signed up as a volunteer to attend training with the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA). By then a growing number of Sikhs were incarcerated for drug-related crimes. The prisons authorities had invited the major religious groups in Singapore to provide spirituality-based counselling to complement Prisons in-care programmes. It was in this context that Dr Kuldip started weekly counselling sessions at the Prisons Selarang Centre.*

*Asked to share why he remained committed to the mission over the last 25 years, Dr Kuldip's candid response: "Experienced counsellors soon realise that addiction is quite enslaving. Breaking free from an ingrained habit is an inherently difficult process for each person with addiction. Acceptance of each person's human nature and of their difficulties are important first steps towards building empathy and nurturing a trusting relationship with each inmate. I reached that stage only after taking a critical inward look at myself to name my own blind spots and imperfections."*

*"That was an important self-realisation. It was like a door that needed to be unlocked to enable me to adopt an empathetic stance towards the men I counselled. Until then, I faced some moments when I felt like my efforts were futile, especially after some of the boys turned back to drugs within a few months or a couple of years after release from incarceration. I had to constantly remind myself that we need to maintain our role as befrienders to these lost souls in order to keep their hopes up, that they too could do good, be responsible family men and dutiful citizens upon their release."*

*Dr Kuldip underlined the significant role that counsellors play, "Befrienders like us providing weekly counselling support are a potential lifeline for some who cannot break fully free from their enslavement. At a time when some of their families may have wavering or little hope, our connection with these offenders helps sustain their hopes, that they too have the potential to embrace reform and one day in future, live a life of purpose and meaning."*

**Extract from SIWEC Insight Newsletter, 2017**

*"That was an important self-realisation. It was like a door that needed to be unlocked to enable me to adopt an empathetic stance towards the men I counselled. Until then, I faced some moments when I felt like my efforts were futile, especially after some of the boys turned back to drugs within a few months or couple of years after release from incarceration. I had to constantly remind myself that we need to maintain our role as befrienders to these lost souls in order to keep their hopes up, that they too could do good, be responsible family men and dutiful citizens upon their release."*

### Reflections by SIWEC's first and longest-serving pioneer female Prison volunteer counsellor: Mdm Balbir Kaur

*"I grew up watching my father doing selfless service at Sikh institutions and was deeply motivated from a young age. I took up studies in Psychology and was doing an internship in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). In the course of my work there, the exposure to the Drug Prevention Programme opened my eyes. I became interested to help the Sikh youth and decided to sign up with the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) as a counsellor. My children were concerned by my choice as they feared for my safety, knowing that I was a rather timid and introverted person. Despite that, I took the chance and went in well prepared to face the challenges.*

*Wow! Looking back, I realised it was the best chance given to me. Today, after a decade, there is no turning back and I happily look forward to Saturdays to take the long journey to Changi where I volunteer. Believe me, upon entering the Prison to help the inmates, a feeling of contentment overtakes me.*

*I feel this is the highest form of Sewa to incarcerated humans. I will continue doing this Sewa as long as my health permits. I call upon my fellow Sikh brothers and sisters to take this road less travelled, to help rehabilitate and reintegrate inmates back into the community as responsible members of society."*

**Extract from SIWEC Insight Newsletter, 2019**



*Mdm Balbir was recognised for her long service with SIWEC by Guest of Honour Mr Amrin Amin, at the Appreciation Day 2019.*



### Reflection by a pioneer prison counselling volunteer — Mr Kashmir Singh

*In the early 1990s there was an outcry in the Sikh community that their relatives were converting to other religions or ending up in prisons or drug rehabilitation centres. These pleas of desperation were brought up to the Sikh Advisory Board which sought the help of Sikh volunteers. I was among those who responded. Our first visit was to Changi Prison, one of the main prisons in Singapore then. To our surprise, the number of Sikh inmates was alarming, in comparison to the percentage of the Sikh population in Singapore.*

*Director of Prisons, Mr Chua Chin Kiat, presenting the 10-year service award to Mr Kashmir Singh in 2007.*



*After the initial visit to Changi Prison, our first task was to ascertain the number of inmates in the smaller drug centres and smaller prisons all over Singapore. Shockingly, the initial number was over a hundred. This situation did not discourage us. It was not a bed of roses; it was a task which required patience and tolerance. We allocated Sikh volunteers to different prisons and drug centres and started the counselling service mainly focused on religious and social issues. The counsellors encountered lots of frustrations and faced discouragement in their task. I am grateful to those who have persevered and sacrificed their time and effort for a good cause.*

### Successes

*Although we faced brickbats at the initial stage, our perseverance has reaped results. Some inmates after being released from rehabilitation centres have embarked on a career and then went on to lead a successful life. We were indeed delighted to learn that a former inmate had set up his own business, another owned a stall at a food market and a third had become a chef at a four-star hotel. On the other hand, there were some cases where the former inmates after being released turned back to their old behaviour. This news was heartbreaking, but we persevered to find a solution and through coaxing and counselling tried to help them. One achievement that deserves mention is that the number of Sikh inmates has fallen over time. On release from prison or drug centres, the inmates had either turned over a new leaf or secured a job that had given them the impetus to strive for a career and focus on their gradual immersion into society.*

*Nowadays, the grass is no greener in counselling new inmates. Their demands are such that it is sometimes difficult for us to fulfil as we need to abide by the prison rules. But we handled the situation on a case-by-case basis and tried our best to work with the prison authorities to ease their problems, regardless of the severity of the case. One word of caution is that we always remind the inmates that they are in a prison and not a hotel, having surrendered their freedom after breaking the law.*

*The Sikh counsellors have dedicated their time to a good cause. In particular, when inmates were on death row, the counsellors were there*

*when the inmates needed them, helping them to believe in Waheguru as the Almighty ultimately decides what is to happen! One young Sikh recited the jakara “Boley Sonihal Sat Sri Akaal!” before he went to the gallows.*

*Finally, I would like to salute the Sikh Welfare Council for initiating a Sikh Counselling Service and fellow Sikh counsellors who have spent their valuable time counselling Sikh inmates in prisons and holding special prayer sessions for Vesakhi, Guru Nanak’s birthday, and helping inmates to uplift themselves to lead a successful life.*

**Extract from SIWEC Sarbat da Bhalla Newsletter, 2008**



SIWEC Vice-Chairman Manmohan Singh, Management Committee Member & Prisons Counselling Sub-Committee Chairman Mr Albel Singh, with volunteer counsellors Ms Anupreet Kaur, Mr Jatinder Singh, Mr Prabhjit Singh, Mr Karam Singh, Late Mr Harawant Singh, Mr Jaspal Singh, Ms Narindar Kaur, and SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit Singh.

## Training of Volunteer Counsellors

All prison counsellors undergo compulsory training at the Singapore After Care Association (SACA) before they are granted an access pass to commence working directly with inmates. The training provides a primer on the general profile of inmates, familiarisation with prison security procedures and the approach to rehabilitation and reintegration, as well as ethical guidelines for counsellors' compliance. Once Prisons issues the access pass, first-time counsellors are paired with one of our established counsellors for orientation sessions to develop the confidence to eventually engage groups of inmates alone.

SIWEC's counselling support programme seeks to provide social, emotional, and spiritual support to incarcerated individuals. The outcome we seek is to re-acquaint, renew and strengthen inmates' relationship with Waheguru Ji (the Almighty) by providing religious counselling anchored in spiritual teachings from Sikhism, to help improve the spiritual well-being of Sikh inmates. This, we hope, will help

bolster their appreciation and belief in the key tenets of Sikhi as a moral compass to guide them towards adopting a pro-social lifestyle, and to eventually break free from drug addiction.

We also ensure that all our volunteer counsellors are trained to assist in the transition of ex-offenders from prison back to society. They impart spiritual knowledge and life skills to ex-offenders.

To this end, beyond the formal training that counsellors receive at Singapore After Care Association (SACA), SIWEC organises up to three volunteers' dialogue sessions per year for counsellors to receive updates, provide feedback and exchange tips and learning.

On occasions, an expert speaker or reformed ex-offender is invited to the dialogue sessions, for deeper learning and engagement with volunteer counsellors.



*From left: Mr Narayan Singh, Mr Dalijeet Singh, Mr Sarjeet Singh (hidden), Mr Amarjit Singh, Mr Albel Singh, Late Mr Harawant Singh, Dr Kuldip Singh, Mdm Balbir Kaur, Mr Karam Singh, Mr Jaspal Singh and Mr Makhan Singh.*



## Counsellors' Curriculum Guide

The desire to develop a standardised counsellors' resource guide was first discussed in late 2012. By 2015, a counsellor's curriculum guide in English was developed by two psychologists with the Singapore Prison Service, Dr Melvinder Singh & Dr Jasmin Kaur, who volunteered their time to assist us. Inputs on Sikhi values for the guide were provided by Dr Jaswant Singh of the Sikh Centre. In February 2016, a dialogue with counsellors was chaired by Mr Albel Singh to introduce the new guide to volunteer counsellors. The structured counselling programme helped to complement counsellors' knowledge and experience with ready-reference materials.



*Early 2016 — Mr Albel Singh chaired a session for Dr Jasmin Kaur to introduce the curriculum guide to assist volunteer counsellors in their sessions.*



*A counsellors' dialogue was coordinated by Ms Indrejit Kaur with Dr Jaswant Singh & CST priests in 2012 to initiate work on the Consellors Guide.*

*Participants (left to right): Mr Karam Singh, Mr Gurmit Singh, welfare officer Ms Indrejit Kaur, Mr Dilbagh Singh, welfare officer Sanjiv Singh, Mr Manmohan Singh, Late Mr Harawant Singh, Dr Kuldip Singh, Prof. Kuldip Singh, Mr Patwant Singh, Mr Rashpal Singh, Dr Jaswant Singh, and Mr Dalijeet Singh.*

## Observance of Vesakhi and Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurbpurab in Prison

For major celebrations like Vesakhi and Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurbpurab, SIWEC coordinates prison visits with active support from the Gurdwaras where Karah Parshad and Chaney are prepared and packed for the inmates. Special clearance is processed for our *Gianis* to perform Kirtan, with a *Tabla and Waja* for

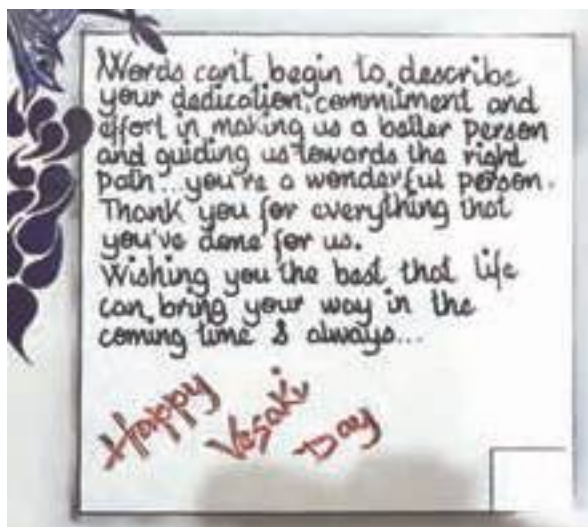
these events. The experience boosts Sikh inmates' morale and serves to reinforce the fact that the larger community has not forgotten the inmates during their incarceration. Sikh inmates are given Vesakhi greeting cards to mail to their loved ones at home. Such visits are conducted on weekdays, as weekends are reserved primarily for counselling sessions. Our volunteers apply for leave from work to participate in these special occasions with the inmates.



2013 — Counsellors Mr Dalijeet S and Mr Karam Singh with SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit S, welfare officer Ms Karam Kaur and the priests from Singh Sabha Gurdwara.



Parshad and chanay being packed at Central Sikh Temple kitchen.



Cards prepared by SIWEC staff for Sikh inmates to send personal Vesakhi greetings to their loved ones.

## Aftercare Support

**Family Support** — Beyond counselling in prison, SIWEC also monitors the state and well-being of inmates' families should they require financial, food rations or psycho-emotional support. Studies have shown that for complete rehabilitation and re-integration to be successful, sustained family support and aftercare are vital. Through monitoring and engagement with ex-offenders, we seek to help reorient their behaviour towards embracing a pro-social, drug-free lifestyle away from crime. In tandem, we provide social counselling to ex-offenders and their families to support them in the reintegration process.

**Partnering with Prisons and SCORE** — SIWEC's assistance includes follow-up counselling, provision of financial aid and engaging former offenders to actively perform Sewa (community service). On employment assistance, the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE), a statutory board under the Ministry of Home Affairs, plays an important role in Singapore's correctional system by creating jobs for inmates and ex-offenders. We urge our inmates to accept the opportunities for training, skills development and employment matching provided by SCORE.

**Partnering Halfway Houses** — We also work with the HEB Ashram and other halfway houses operated by faith-based groups and by Prisons, where inmates serve out their 6-month mandatory aftercare support (MAS) transition. Our staff and volunteers continue to engage and support those posted to halfway houses before their final release.

The Ashram (a halfway house in Sembawang) was set up in 1999 jointly by the Hindu Endowment Board

and the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board. It has been assisting substance abusers and penal offenders undergoing rehabilitation six months prior to their release from detention, to assist their reintegration into society.

Ashram residents also visit Yishun Gurdwara on a regular basis to perform Sewa. As a gesture of moral support, Yishun Gurdwara provides langgar (Punjabi vegetarian food) once a week to the residents of the Ashram. This is a long-standing practice that continues to be sustained to the present day, with an imposed break during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

**Visit to HEB-Ashram by Sikh community leaders** — In the HEB Ashram's safe and supportive environment, its residents receive emotional and spiritual guidance through a range of support programmes to help equip them with life skills and the motivation to secure a job and remain employed post-release.

SIWEC Vice-Chairman (Admin) Mr Harmit Singh reflected, "As a small community, it is important for the Sikh community to work with agencies such as the HEB Ashram, so that we utilise our limited resources for maximum impact wherever we can."

SIWEC Manager Mr Ranjit Singh highlighted, "SIWEC has developed a close and collaborative relationship with the Ashram. We are grateful that one of the rooms there is designated as a prayer room for Sikh residents. It is a quiet space for reflection and conducive for individual or group prayer and counselling.



Each year the Ashram supports 4–5 Sikh residents in their transition from prison. A SIWEC counsellor, Mr Dalijeet Singh, regularly visits the Ashram to support our Sikh boys in the very critical period of transition from life at Changi prison via the Ashram, before they return to their family and society. We

also have an arrangement where Yishun Gurdwara provides langgar for the Ashram one day per week. In turn, residents from the Ashram are provided the opportunity to perform Sewa at Yishun and Central Sikh Temple”.



*Two representatives from the Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC) Manager Mr Ranjit Singh and our then Secretary Mr Harmit Singh accompanied the Sikh delegation led by Chairman of Central Sikh Gurdwara Board Mr Baljit Singh, on a visit hosted by the management committee of the HEB-Ashram, on Saturday, 7 October 2017.*

## Recognition of Our Prison Volunteers

SIWEC is grateful to Singapore Prison Service for the effort to engage and recognise our dedicated volunteer counsellors. Although all volunteers keep their service in prisons low-key and do not covet

attention, the annual volunteer awards to affirm volunteers' contributions are truly appreciated by our volunteers, staff, and management team.

### 2015 Singapore Prisons Service Volunteers Awards



2015 — Mr Sarjeet Singh received the award for 5 years of volunteer service from then Second Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Masagos Zulkifli.



From left: SIWEC's Prisons Counselling Sub-Committee Chairman Mr Albel Singh, Mr Baldev Singh (welfare officer in charge of Prisons coordination) and volunteer counsellor Mr Sarjeet Singh (accompanied by his wife) with Commissioner of Prisons Desmond Chin.



### 2016 Singapore Prisons Service Volunteers Awards



2016 — Volunteers Mr Ranjit Singh, Mr Harawant Singh and Mr Manmohan Singh received their 5 years' service award.

### 2017 Singapore Prisons Service Volunteers Awards



Prison Counselling Sub-Committee Chairman Mr Albel Singh (left), Dr Kuldip Singh, senior welfare officer Mr Baldev Singh, and SIWEC Vice-Chairman (Operations) Mr Manmohan Singh, at the 2017 Prisons Volunteers Awards Ceremony.



## 2018 Singapore Prisons Service Volunteers Awards



*In 2018, Mr Makhan Singh and Ms Anupreet Anand (centre of photo) were both recognised for 5 years of service as Prisons counsellors. SIWEC's senior welfare officer Mr Baldev Singh and Vice-Chairman Mr Manmohan Singh witnessed the ceremony.*

## 2019 Singapore Prison Service Volunteers Awards

Mr Albel Singh, when presenting Mr Dalijeet Singh his 15 years of volunteer service certificate from Singapore Prisons Service during a volunteer dialogue meeting, reflected, “Mr Dalijeet is our most active and longest serving volunteer after Dr Kuldip. He counsels every weekend at Changi and also on Tuesday evenings at the Ashram halfway house in Sembawang. For 2019 alone, Dalijeet had conducted a total of 59 counselling sessions over the weekends. His commitment to Sewa is truly inspirational.”

SIWEC was recognised for its role as a partner organisation at the annual awards ceremony. Receiving the award for SIWEC was Mr Albel Singh, Chairman of SIWEC's Sub-Committee for Prisons Counselling, who reflected with pride on the work of our volunteer counsellors, “We are indeed fortunate to have a dedicated group of 18 volunteers whose devotion to Sewa in the cause of helping our Sikh inmates is commendable. It is not easy to sustain enthusiasm for so many years. Dr Kuldip Singh and Mr Dalijeet Singh are truly exemplary pillars of

support whose devotion inspires not only our Sikh inmates but also fellow volunteers.”

Mr Albel Singh commended the role played by Mr Baldev Singh, SIWEC's senior welfare officer responsible for all coordination with prisons since 2015, on volunteers' access passes and for coordinating the Vesakhi and Gurburab observances with inmates, sourcing for counselling resources, recruitment, and training of new counsellors, planning for counsellors' rosters, besides also planning, and managing the quarterly dialogue sessions. He said, “Baldev's work ethic and his commitment to ensuring that a counsellor is available for every counselling session is remarkable. Despite his other major responsibility managing bereavement support in SIWEC, he strives to improve the currency of counselling materials, whilst coordinating major in-care and aftercare activities, as well as the recruitment, training and engagement of all our volunteer counsellors.”

2020 National Day Awards



Volunteer counsellor Mr Dalijeet Singh, (who was unable to attend the formal event), received his certificate for completing 15 years of volunteer service in 2019 from Mr Albel Singh.



Senior Welfare Officer Mr Baldev Singh receiving his National Day Award 2020 from Mr Gurdip Singh Usma.

Our Staff Prison Counsellors

Jasbir Singh Suropada
Indrejit Kaur
Ranjit Singh Wahla
Baldev Singh

Our Volunteer Prison Counsellors

Albel Singh	Hardeep Singh	Manmohan Singh
Amarjit Singh	Jaspal Singh	Mukia Singh
Anupreet Kaur	Jeispreit Kaur Bajaj	Prabhjit Singh
Balbir Kaur	Karam Singh	Premjeet Singh
Dalijeet Singh	Dr Kuldeep Singh	Ranjit Singh Vahan
Late Harawant Singh (until 2019)	Makhan Singh	Sarjeet Singh





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# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

# CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

## Sikh Welfare Council (SIWEC)

Sikh Welfare Council is a Singapore-registered charity and an approved Institution of Public Character (IPC) since 2009. We help and serve all Singaporeans (i.e. not only Sikhs) and belong to the whole community (i.e. not to any individual or particular Sikh institution).

It is a full member of the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) since 2014. We use the information provided responsibly, with due care and confidentiality, when extending our service to our beneficiaries.

Sikh Welfare Council partners with others in service.

We work closely with other voluntary welfare organisations (VWO) and social service, health and home front agencies to minimise duplication of services, collaborate, share resources, expertise, and assistance for the mutual benefit of our clients.

### Our Mission

To improve the welfare and well-being of the community.

### Our Objectives

To carry out and manage welfare schemes in the form of relief, financial assistance, health, education, housing or provide any other help (collectively referred to as welfare) for those requiring assistance within the Singapore community.

The objectives of SIWEC are achieved by formulating policies relating to welfare matters in the community and spearheading their implementation, and working with government and non-governmental agencies on welfare-related matters.

## Council Members

The ordinary council members (owners or key stakeholders) of SIWEC are the Sikh institutions in Singapore. The heads of each institution represent their respective institutions at the Council general meetings. A general meeting of the Council members is the highest decision-making body of SIWEC.

Ordinary Council Members	
Central Sikh Gurdwara Board	Gurdwara Sahib Yishun
Isteri Sat Sang (Central Sikh Temple)	Khalsa Dharmak Sabha
Khalsa Jiwan Sudhar Sabha	Pardesi Khalsa Dharmak Diwan
Sikh Missionary Society of Malaya	Sikh Business Association
Sikh Sewaks, Singapore	Singapore Khalsa Association
Singapore Sikh Education Foundation	Sri Guru Nanak Sat Sang Sabha
Sri Guru Singh Sabha Singapore	Young Sikh Association, Singapore

Associate Council Member
Sikh Advisory Board

## Management Committee

SIWEC is governed by its management committee elected every two years at the annual general meeting by the Council members. All Management Committee members must be ordinary members of one of the Council's member organisations.

As part of its role, the management committee:

- Approves the budget for the financial year and monitor expenditure against budget
- Regularly monitors the progress of the programmes
- Taps on grants and funding from the government
- Formulates policies relating to welfare matters in the community and spearheads their implementation
- Works with government and non-governmental agencies on welfare-related matters

The management committee members are elected according to established procedures at the annual general meeting every two years. SIWEC holds a formal orientation programme for all its new management committee members which involves briefings by the manager of SIWEC (for an overview of SIWEC's programmes and services); and the Chairman (on terms of reference, member's responsibility, functions, and scope of the various programmes).

The management committee shall conduct self-evaluation at least once every two years to assess its performance and effectiveness and adhere closely to the SIWEC Code of Conduct. The last self-evaluation was conducted in 2020. The management committee also reviews its performance and effectiveness with Council members twice a year at the council review meeting and the annual general meeting.

## Functional Sub-Committees

SIWEC manages its activities by use of the following five sub-committees whose composition and terms of reference are provided in the table below:

- Clients Review Committee
- Human Resource Committee
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Programmes & Services Committee
- Community Engagement Committee

## Management Committee Recruitment, Succession Planning and Training Policy

Suitably qualified management committee members are duly nominated and seconded for election to serve a two-year term by the Council members. Since obtaining IPC status, SIWEC has strived to practice self-renewal and succession planning. The Constitution restricts any office bearer from serving more than 3 terms (6 years) as Chairman and more than 2 consecutive terms (4 years) as Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer. For the other positions, we review and balance between inducting new and younger members, ensuring diversity of experience across the management committee, besides considering the ability of volunteers to commit the time to serve actively.

SIWEC has a policy to encourage management committee members to attend the necessary workshops and training required in the areas of corporate governance and any other specialised skills needed in the execution of their duties.



## SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL ORGANISATION CHART — SUB COMMITTEES

<p><b>Clients Review Committee</b></p> <p><b>Chairman:</b> Chairman</p> <p><b>Members:</b> VC – Operations VC – Admin MC Member (Family Support)</p>	<p><b>Human Resource Committee</b></p> <p><b>Chairman:</b> Chairman</p> <p><b>Members:</b> VC – Operations Secretary Treasurer</p>	<p><b>Programmes &amp; Services Committee</b></p> <p><b>Chairman:</b> VC – Operations</p> <p><b>Members:</b> MC Member (Bereavement) MC Member (Prison Counselling) MC Member (Eldercare &amp; Healthcare) MC Member (Education)</p>	<p><b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee</b></p> <p><b>Chairman:</b> VC - Admin</p> <p><b>Members:</b> Treasurer Asst Treasurer One MC Member</p>	<p><b>Community Engagement Committee</b></p> <p><b>Chairman:</b> VC - Operations</p> <p><b>Members:</b> Secretary Asst Secretary Asst Treasurer MC Member (Volunteer Mgmt) One other MC Member</p>
<p><b>Terms of Reference:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review all new and periodic review cases on a regular basis and approve all support needed</li> <li>Liaise with relevant agencies to ensure full support is provided</li> <li>Review adequacy of financial support levels in line with government agencies</li> <li>Review processes to identify all possible clients requiring support</li> <li>Publicising availability of SIWEC and other Government support schemes to ensure all those requiring assistance are reached</li> </ul>	<p><b>Terms of Reference:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide adequate personnel to serve the needs of SIWEC and its clients</li> <li>Ensure compliance with the SIWEC Human Resource Policy</li> <li>Review compensation and other human resource policies of SIWEC to be in line with National Council of Social Services Guidelines</li> <li>Conduct regular performance reviews of all staff and approve all salary adjustments and bonuses</li> </ul>	<p><b>Terms of Reference:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Counselling:</b> To provide counselling services and rehabilitation of drug addicts and inmates in our counselling program to assist them to integrate back into society</li> <li><b>Education:</b> To provide financial and academic support to the students requiring help</li> <li><b>Eldercare:</b> To arrange suitable programs for the elderly to lead an active lifestyle</li> <li><b>Healthcare:</b> To provide for the support and care for client patients in hospitals, nursing homes through visits and regular contact</li> <li><b>Bereavement:</b> To provide bereaved families with social, emotional, spiritual and financial support as needed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Terms of Reference:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure compliance with all internal controls and operating policy manuals in SIWEC and review their adequacy</li> <li>Co-ordinate statutory audit with external auditors and review their findings</li> <li>Publish the SIWEC Annual Report</li> <li>Co-ordinate compliance and transparency audit with internal auditors and review their findings</li> <li>Review and manage the SIWEC Risk Management Strategy; including conducting a Risk Assessment Review every 3 years</li> </ul>	<p><b>Terms of Reference:</b></p> <p><b>Community Outreach:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of SIWEC activities or government bodies at various institutions as a platform for community outreach for awareness and fund raising</li> <li>Organise major fund raising events</li> <li>Coordinate links with relevant government or other agencies for mutually beneficial collaborations</li> <li>Publish regular SIWEC newsletters and other publicity materials</li> <li>Maintain regular presence on social media platforms</li> </ul> <p><b>Volunteer Management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with institutions and individuals to recruit and build a pool of regular volunteers</li> <li>Sourcing for and arranging suitable training programs for volunteers, staff and committee members</li> <li>Ensuring adequate recognition of Volunteer Services and their publicity.</li> </ul>

## Council and Management Committee Meetings

**Council meetings** are held twice a year (an annual general meeting and a mid-year council review meeting).

The purpose of these meetings is to approve the annual budget, audited financial statements and annual reports, as well as to update council members on the status of significant on-going and upcoming activities.

**Management committee meetings** are held monthly to review all concluded programme activities in the previous month and upcoming activities for the following month; financial status for that month, as well as to monitor, evaluate and provide guidance on the implementation of new initiatives by SIWEC. In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, nearly all the meetings were convened online via the Zoom platform.



| SIWEC Council meeting in progress via Zoom.



| SIWEC Annual General Meeting 2015.



| Management committee meeting in session (January 2020).

The **Clients Review Committee meetings** are held monthly with SIWEC Manager and staff taking charge of the Family Support Programme to review new cases of first-time client families and those scheduled for half-yearly review. The team presents recommendations for the quantum of support to be extended to each client-family and the appropriate duration of support. A concise but anonymous case summary with accompanying recommendation is then presented to the management committee for approval.

## Institution of Public Character (IPC)

Institution of Public Character (IPC status) is granted by the Commissioner of Charities (COC) and Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) to charities providing social services to the community on a secular basis. To attract donations from the public to these social service agencies, all such donations were granted income tax exemptions amounting to 2.5 times the donated amount.

In November 2009, SIWEC was granted IPC status. The initial grant period was up to 30 September 2011. This was subject to subsequent renewals of between 24 and 30 months, based on satisfying all the IPC conditions. Our IPC status was subsequently renewed in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019 accordingly. The current IPC status is valid until January 2022, when it will be due for renewal.

In the past, SIWEC had acted as the coordinating body to collect and forward funds from the Sikh institutions to the Singapore Red Cross and Mercy Relief, as part of the community's response to send disaster relief assistance overseas, in the spirit of Sarbat da Bhalla. However, SIWEC's coordinating role for humanitarian aid overseas was discontinued as IPC funds sourced domestically and granted tax exemption are meant to benefit Singapore residents only.

## Code of Corporate Governance

As a charity with IPC status, SIWEC strives to maintain the highest level of corporate governance and transparency in our annual reports. In this regard, we conduct four reviews to ensure compliance:

- Corporate Governance Evaluation Review
- Charities Transparency Framework Review
- Risk Assessment Review
- Management Committee Self-Evaluation Review

The results of the last reviews done for these 4 areas in 2020 were as follows:

- a. The Internal Auditors conducted a review of the **Corporate Governance Evaluation** using the Enhanced Checklist for IPC or SIWEC in March 2021 and the overall score was 100%. The previous review was done in March 2020 and the score was 93%. The detailed results of the reviews are available on our website and in our Annual Reports.
- b. The Internal Auditors conducted a review of the 2019 SIWEC Annual Report using the **Charities Transparency Framework** Checklist for IPCs in July 2020 and the overall score was 91.6%. This was the first time such a review was conducted.
- c. Our external consultants, Shared Services for Charities, conducted a **Risk Assessment Review** of SIWEC in 2020 and the finding was that we had adequate controls for 8 of the 11 risks identified. For the remaining three risks, actions items have been drawn up to address them in 2021.
- d. The management committee conducted a **Self-Evaluation Review** in December 2020. The results reflected a "Very Good" performance rating. "Very Good" is the 2nd highest rating, with "Excellent" being the highest rating. The 2 areas, which require some improvements will be addressed in 2021. This was the first time such a review was conducted.



## National Council of Social Service (NCSS) Membership

After the Sikh Welfare Council was registered as a charity organisation and granted IPC status, it initially joined the NCSS as an associate member in 2012. The Council became a full member in 2014 after it had fulfilled the criteria for full membership.

Full NCSS membership has benefited SIWEC in meaningful ways, specifically:

- Guidance on capability and capacity-building and best practices in managing a charity.
- Accessing VWOs-Charities Capabilities (VCF) subsidise training courses for management, volunteers, and staff.
- Recommendations on appropriate wage levels for the social service sector.
- Eligibility to apply for NCSS-managed government grants such as Care & Share and Bicentennial Fund.
- Participation in various surveys for the benefit of the social service sector.
- Participation in workshops and meetings to help understand and guide the formulation of NCSS policies in the social service sector.

## Key SIWEC Policies

### Management Committee & Staff Remuneration Policy

SIWEC adheres to the following policies in connection with management committee and staff remuneration:

- a. No member of the management committee receives any remuneration from SIWEC.
- b. No full-time staff member is appointed to the management committee.
- c. The salary scale for SIWEC Staff is set using the salary guidelines for the social services sector issued by the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) as a guide.
- d. The gross annual salaries (including allowances) of the SIWEC staff above \$50,000 is disclosed in the Annual Report in bands of \$25,000.
- e. All staff salaries are set and approved by the Human Resource Committee and no staff member is involved in setting their own remuneration.

### Donations Policy

All proposals to provide any donations to any other charity or institution in Singapore are considered on a case-by-case basis and require the approval of the management committee.

SIWEC is not permitted to provide donations to overseas charities without the prior approval of the relevant authorities.

## Reserve Policy

The Corporate Governance Guidelines from the Commissioner of Charities stipulate that every charity is required to have a stated reserve policy disclosed in the annual report. The objective of this reserve policy is to ensure that whilst every effort should be made to raise funds to support the operations of the charity and keep some for a rainy day, they should not go overboard and focus most of their efforts on accumulating funds while failing to use funds for their primary purpose, which is to deliver the intended social service to their clients.

Keeping this in mind, the Sikh Welfare Council has articulated that it would strive to maintain cash or equivalent general reserves to either sustain four years of total operating and administrative expenses (rounded up to the nearest \$0.5 million); or \$4 million; whichever is higher.

The general reserves as at 2020 stand at around \$2.9 million; representing over 3.88 years of SIWEC's total operating and administrative expenses. The general reserves are invested in safe investments to protect capital and generate returns.

In addition to the general reserves, SIWEC also has a **Bereavement Trust Fund**. These funds are provided by the named individuals and maintained by SIWEC to be used for their funeral, prayers and related expenses at the time of their passing away. The balance in this fund as at 31 December 2020 was \$3,000.

## Conflict of Interest Policy

The Sikh Welfare Council's conflict of interest policy as stipulated in the constitution is outlined below:

Whenever a member of the management committee, its sub-committees or staff is in any way, directly or indirectly connected, or has an interest in a transaction, project, beneficiary, employee, or any other matter to be discussed at a meeting:

- a. the member shall disclose the nature of his interest before the discussion on the matter begins;
- b. the member concerned should not participate in the vote on the matter nor count towards the quorum for that portion of the meeting;
- c. the member concerned should not participate in the discussion on the matter and should also offer to withdraw from the meeting. Any exception for him to continue to participate in the discussion requires a two-thirds majority of the remaining members of the management committee present. However, if he is allowed to participate in the discussion, he shall not participate in the vote nor be considered to form the quorum for that portion of the meeting.

For the purpose of the above clause, a member of the management committee, sub-committee or staff is considered as being connected or having an interest in the matter if:

- a. that person being discussed is the member's child, sibling, parent, spouse, spouse's parent, spouse's sibling, grandparent or grandchild.

- b. the member or his spouse is directly or indirectly a shareholder (excluding “less than 5%” stake in a public listed company), director, partner, agent or key executive of business.
- c. the member is the sitting President, Vice-President, Honorary Secretary or Honorary Treasurer of an ordinary or associate member of SIWEC. However, this shall only apply in connection with matters being discussed regarding that specific Ordinary or Associate member organisation/institution.

The disclosure, discussions and final decisions on the matter should be documented in the minutes of meeting.

All management committee, sub-committee members and staff are required to submit a confirmation of compliance annually.

### Whistle-Blowing Policy

SIWEC promotes an open, transparent, no-rank culture where staff are encouraged to whistle-blow on any possible organisational or staff improprieties.

SIWEC is committed to a high standard of compliance with accounting, financial reporting, internal controls, and auditing requirements and does not tolerate any malpractice, impropriety, statutory non-compliance, or wrongdoing by staff in the course of their work.

The purpose of the whistle-blowing policy is to provide assurance to staff to raise their concerns and disclose any improper conduct within SIWEC in accordance with the procedures provided in this policy without fear of retaliation, whilst offering protection to the whistleblower(s). The policy also allows SIWEC to intervene and investigate any

concerns relating to improper conduct or practice, through internal channels.

Any whistle-blowing information or matters regarding staff or management committee members should be directed to the Chairman and he shall determine the appropriate course of action.

Any whistle-blowing information or matters regarding the Chairman should be directed to the Vice-Chairman or Secretary, who shall collectively determine the appropriate course of action.

## SIWEC Policies and Procedures Manuals

SIWEC has the following documented policies and procedures manuals used in its operations:

### Human Resource Manual

Matters like recruitment, remuneration, performance management, benefits, code of conduct, grievance handling, whistle blowing, conflict of interest, etc.

### Finance Manual

Matters like accounting policies, financial procedures, financial reporting, budgeting, procurement, fund raising, bursary management, grant management, investment management, etc.

### Risk Management Policy & Procedures Manual

Matters like risk governance, roles and responsibilities, strategy, the risk management and risk assessment processes.

From 2021, SIWEC intends to document and review the following:

- SIWEC Operations Manual
- IT Security Policy Manual
- Data Protection Plan & Policy Manual
- PDPA Compliance Review



SIWEC manuals.



# OUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

## Financial Position

In order to finance all the activities of SIWEC for the benefit of our beneficiaries, we need to maintain a healthy financial position, such that our annual donations and other sources of income should exceed our total operating expenses for the various programmes. We are glad that this had been achieved over for the past decade or so, thereby enabling SIWEC to build a reserve of \$2.9 million as at 2020. This is still slightly below our target of \$4 million in reserves to help sustain 4 years of SIWEC operations in the event of a prolonged economic downturn.

### Income

Our income over the past five years has averaged over \$800,000 per year, thanks to the cycling fund-raising activities and the government & Tote Board grants we have secured.

Individual Giro and cash donations together with contributions from the Sikh Institutions, represent 36% of our income. These continue to be important sources of funds for SIWEC.

### Operating Expenses

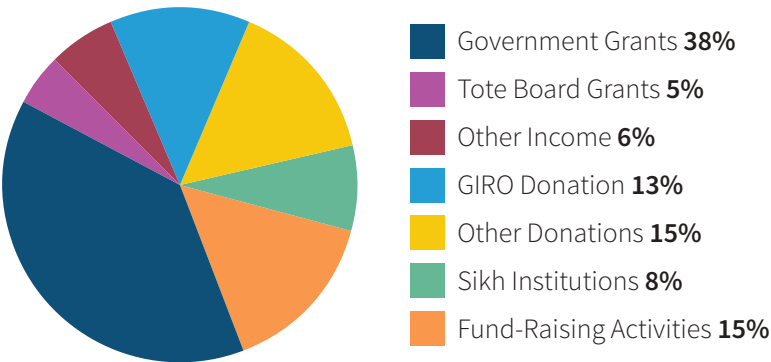
Our total operating expenses have averaged about \$620,000 per year over the past 5 years.

The manpower cost of operating each service is reflected in the corresponding cost category.

Our largest expenditure is on family support.

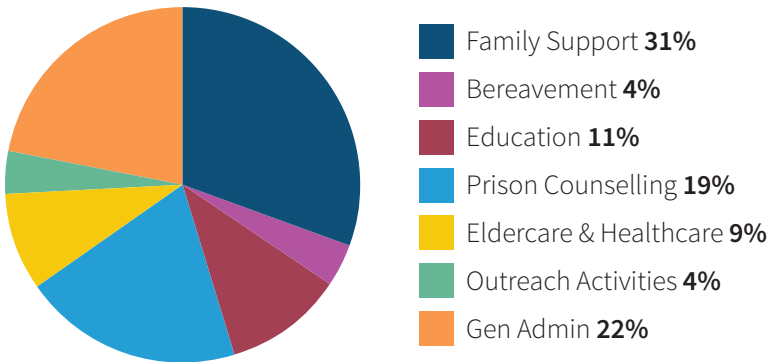
Our general administration cost at 22% of our total cost (and 16% of Total Income) is prudently managed, within the Commissioner of Charities Guidelines to not exceed 30% of Total Income.

## Sources of Income



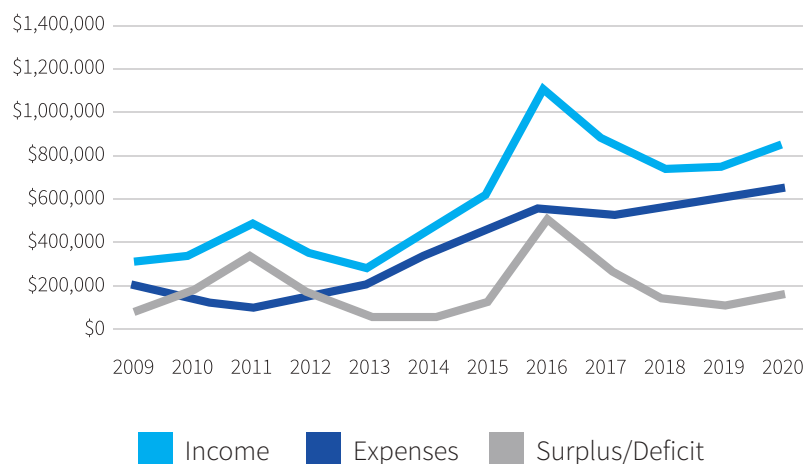
Total Income Average \$800k/year

## Nature of Operating Expenses



Total Expenses Average \$620k/year

## Financial Performance 2009 – 2020



## Income & Expenses Trend: 2009–2020

Over the past 11 years, our income has gradually increased from under \$400,000 per year to over \$800,000 per year. This has been brought about by the cycling fund-raising events and matching government and Tote Board grants, which we have been able to receive, together with the continued support of our regular donors and Sikh Institutions.

During the same period, our total operating expenses have increased from about \$250,000 per year to over \$600,000 per year resulting from:

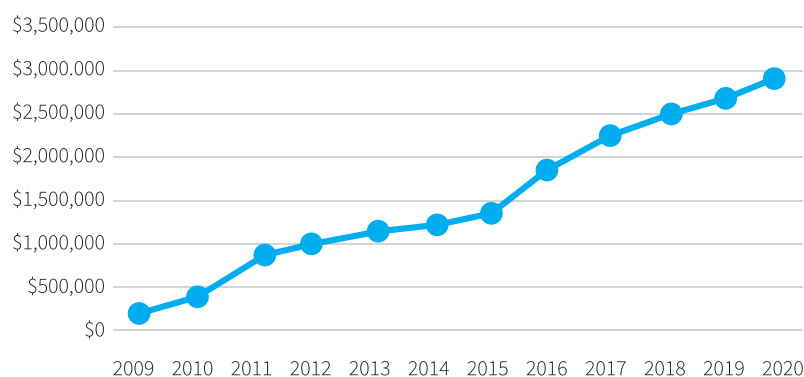
- Strengthening our Healthcare and Eldercare support, volunteer management and outreach programmes while initiating new ones such as the SSEF Punjabi Language FA Support initiative and the Academic Excellence programme.
- Additional staff hired to manage new programmes and manage our communications.
- To comply with the more stringent IPC Code of Governance, we strengthened our operations with a Manager and an administrative executive.

## Reserves

With prudent management of our funds and increasing income from government grants, we have built up our reserves over the last 11 years from less than \$200,000 in 2009, to \$2,900,000 in 2020. This is getting nearer our stated SIWEC Reserve Policy target, which is to maintain a reserve of four years of total operating expenses or \$4 million, whichever is higher.

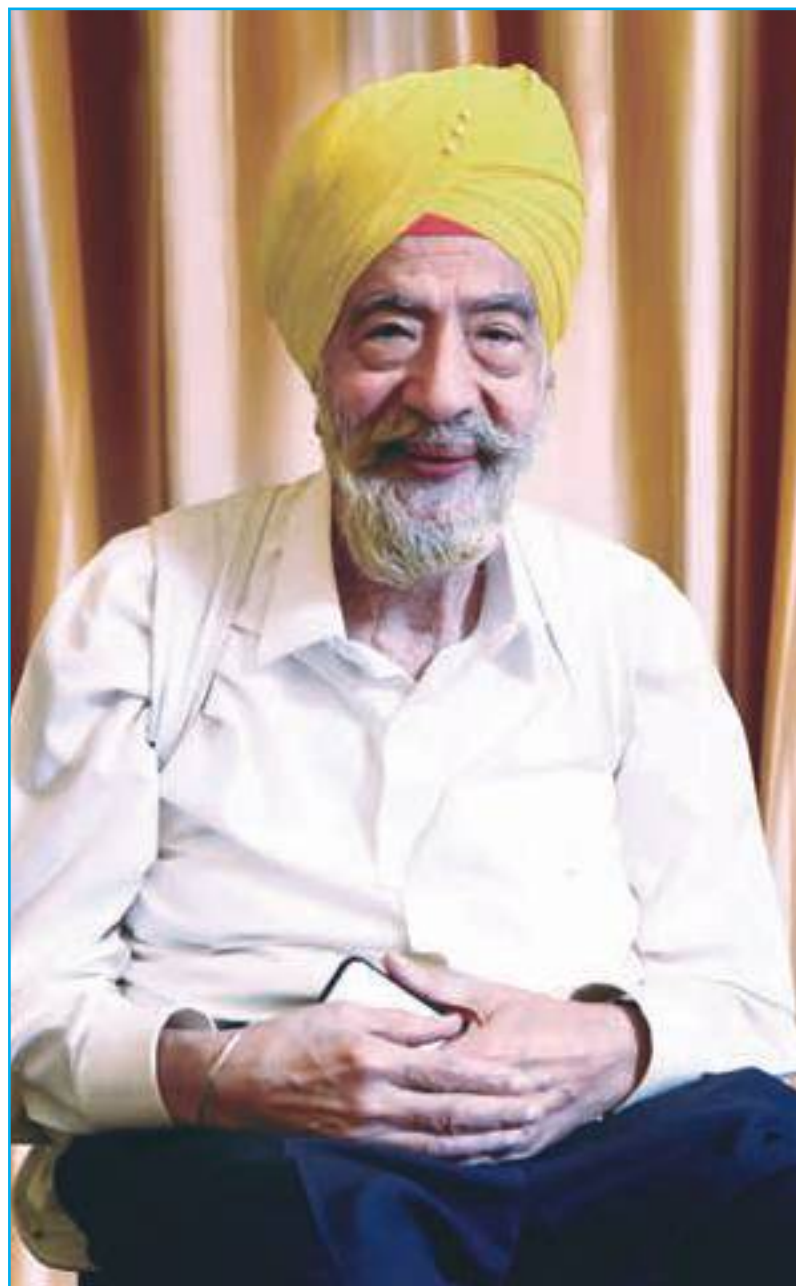
Despite these healthy reserves, we will continue to strive to ensure that our income in each year exceeds the total expenses of the same year and not rely on past reserves, except in extreme situations.

## SIWEC Reserves



# CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

## PATRON



**S Kartar Singh Thakral**

## TRUSTEES



**S Mohinder Singh  
Thakral**



**S Daljit Singh  
Randhawa**



**S Gurcharan Singh  
Narula**



**S Mahn Singh  
Bajaj**



**S Manmohan Singh  
Thakral**



**Sardarni Jagir Kaur  
Brahmpura**



## SIWEC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: 2019–2021



*Sitting from left to right: Ms Simha Kaur Jastol, Mr Gurdip Singh Usma, Ms Sarjit Kaur Khosa, Ms Sharanjit Kaur.*

*Standing from left to right: Mr Rashminder Singh, Mr Sukhbir Singh, Mr Harmit Singh, Mr Manmohan Singh, Mr Harmit Singh Khwatra, Mr Albel Singh, Mr Sarabjeet Singh.*

**Chairman**

**Vice-Chairman (Operations)**

**Vice-Chairman (Admin)**

**Secretary**

**Assistant Secretary**

**Treasurer**

**Assistant Treasurer**

**Committee Members**

Mr Gurdip Singh Usma

Mr Manmohan Singh

Mr Harmit Singh

Ms Simha Kaur Jastol

Ms Sharanjit Kaur

Mr Sukhbir Singh

Mr Rashminder Singh

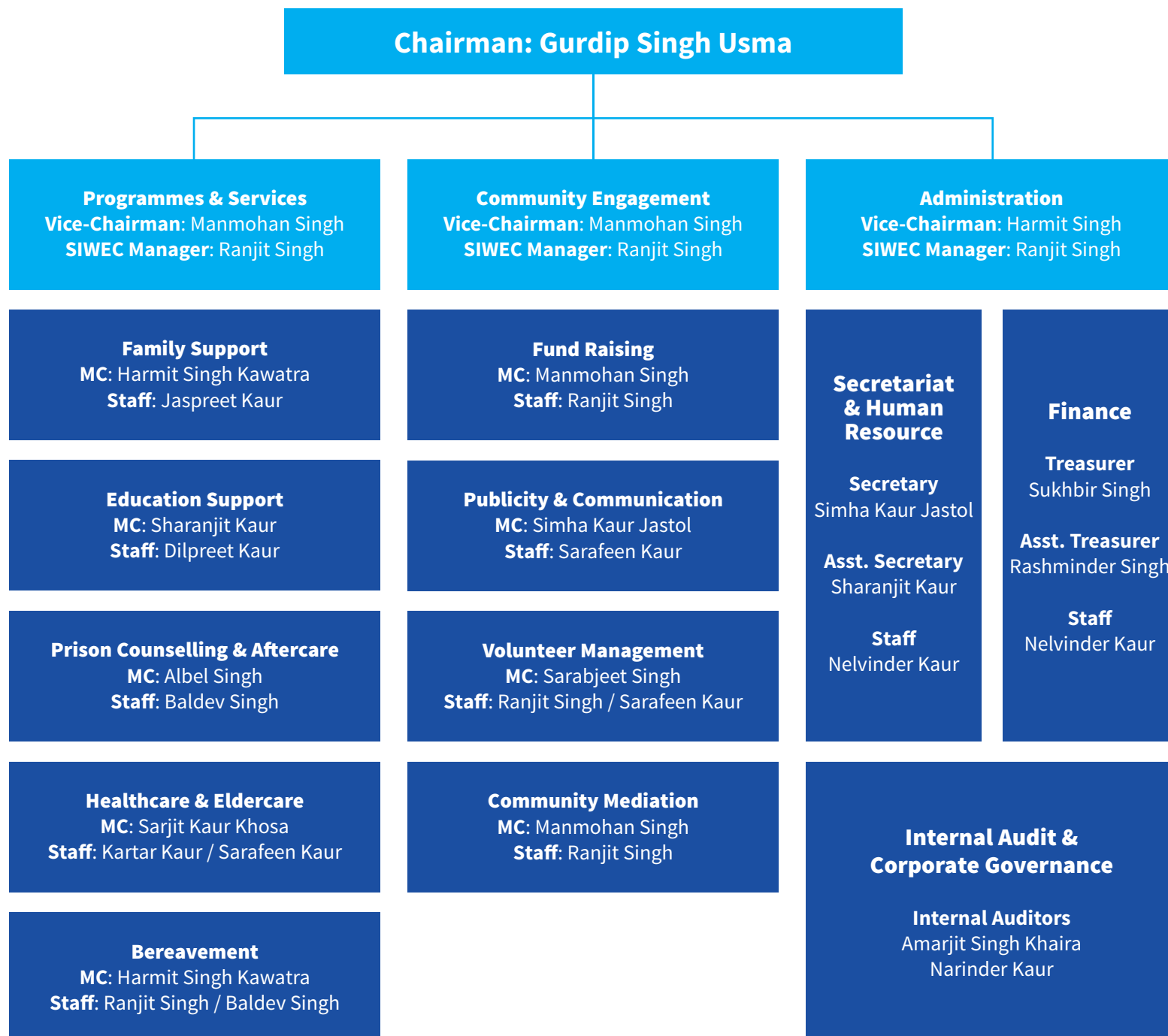
Mrs Sarjit Kaur Khosa

Mr Sarabjeet Singh

Mr Albel Singh

Mr Harmit Singh Khwatra

## SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL ORGANISATION CHART 2019–2021



## SIWEC OPERATIONS TEAM



*Sitting from left to right:  
Ms Dilpreet Kaur, Mdm Kartar Kaur,  
Ms Sarafeen Kaur Twinky.*

*Standing from left to right:  
Mr Baldev Singh, Ms Nelvinder Kaur,  
Ms Jaspreet Kaur, Mr Ranjit Singh Wahla.*

<b>SIWEC Manager</b>	Mr Ranjit Singh Wahla
<b>Senior Welfare Officer</b>	Mr Baldev Singh
<b>Senior Admin Executive</b>	Ms Nelvinder Kaur
<b>Senior Welfare Officer</b>	Ms Jaspreet Kaur
<b>Healthcare Ambassador</b>	Mdm Kartar Kaur
<b>Programme &amp; Comms. Executive</b>	Ms Sarafeen Kaur Twinky
<b>Education Project Officer</b>	Ms Dilpreet Kaur



### SIWEC Management Committees 1995–2009 (Pre-IPC Status)

Designation	November 1995	May 1998	November 2000
<b>Chairman</b>	Sorinder Singh	Sorinder Singh	Sorinder Singh
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Bhajan Singh Suropada	Bhajan Singh Suropada	Bhajan Singh Suropada
<b>Secretary</b>	Harmit Singh Gandhi	Deep Singh	Harmit Singh Gandhi
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Sarwan Singh	Kaka Singh	Sarwan Singh
<b>Treasurer</b>	Nirmal Singh	Balbeer Singh Mangat	Nirmal Singh
<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	Surjit Singh Wasan	Nirmal Singh	Balbeer Singh Mangat
<b>Committee Members</b>	Kashmir Singh Amar Kaur Jaswant Singh Gill Jaswant Singh Bandal  (Representatives from all Sikh Institutions)	Kashmir Singh Mejar Singh Gill Jaswant Singh Gill Kuldeep Singh Balbir Singh  (Representatives from all Sikh Institutions)	Kashmir Singh Mejar Singh Gill Surjit Singh Rode Kuldeep Singh Balbir Singh Karamjit Kaur Davendra Singh  (Representatives from all Sikh Institutions)
<b>Internal Auditors</b>		Albel Singh Harmander Singh	Batan Singh

Designation	November 2003	May 2006	June 2009
<b>Chairman</b>	Sorinder Singh	Sorinder Singh	Jagjit Singh Sekhon
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Bhajan Singh Suropada	Bhajan Singh Suropada	Harminder Singh
<b>Secretary</b>	Harjeet Singh Rikhraj	Harjeet Singh Rikhraj	Bhupinder Singh
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Surjit Singh Wasan	Gurcharanjit Singh Suropada	Gurdip Singh Usma
<b>Treasurer</b>	Harmit Singh Gandhi	Nirmal Singh	Inderpal Singh
<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	Nirmal Singh	Sarwan Singh	Balbeer Singh Mangat
<b>Committee Members</b>	Kashmir Singh Madan Mohan Singh Inderjeet Singh  (Representatives from all Sikh Institutions)	Kashmir Singh Inderjeet Singh Surjit Singh Rode  (Representatives from all Sikh Institutions)	(Representatives from all Sikh Institutions)
<b>Internal Auditors</b>			Jaspal Singh Hayer Jagjit Singh Gill

### SIWEC Management Committees 2009–2019 (Post-IPC Status)

Designation	October 2009	April 2011	June 2013
<b>Chairman</b>	Jagjit Singh Sekhon	Jagjit Singh Sekhon	Amarjit Singh Wasan
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Gurdip Singh Usma	Amarjit Singh Wasan	Inderpal Singh Gurmit Kaur Sroya
<b>Secretary</b>	Amarjit Singh Wasan	Inderpal Singh	Dinesh Singh
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Amritpal Singh Randhawa	Sharanjit Kaur
<b>Treasurer</b>	Inderpal Singh	Gurmit Singh Grewal	Harmit Singh
<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	Balbeer Singh Mangat	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Amritpal Singh Randhawa
<b>Committee Members</b>	Manmohan Singh Sarjit Kaur Gill Surinder Singh Dinesh Singh Kawalpal Singh	Manmohan Singh Sarjit Kaur Gill Manjeet Singh Rikhraj Dinesh Singh Gurmit Kaur Sroya	Manmohan Singh Sarjit Kaur Gill Ranvir Singh Jasminder Singh Gholia Malminderjit Singh
<b>Internal Auditors</b>	Jaspal Singh Hayer Jagjit Singh Gill	Jaspal Singh Hayer Jagjit Singh Gill	Gurcharan Singh



Designation	June 2015	June 2017	June 2019
<b>Chairman</b>	Gurdip Singh Usma	Gurdip Singh Usma	Gurdip Singh Usma
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	Manmohan Singh Gurmit Kaur Sroya	Manmohan Singh	Manmohan Singh Harmit Singh
<b>Secretary</b>	Sharanjit Kaur	Harmit Singh	Simha Kaur Jastol
<b>Assistant Secretary</b>	Simranjit Kaur	Harjit Kaur	Sharanjit Kaur
<b>Treasurer</b>	Harmit Singh	Sukhbir Singh Chakkar	Sukhbir Singh Chakkar
<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	Gursharan Kaur	Amritpal Singh Randhawa	Rashminder Singh
<b>Committee Members</b>	Albel Singh Amritpal Singh Randhawa Harjit Kaur Sarjit Kaur Khosa Sarabjeet Singh	Albel Singh Harmit Singh Khwatra Sharanjit Kaur Sarjit Kaur Khosa Sarabjeet Singh	Albel Singh Harmit Singh Khwatra Sarjit Kaur Khosa Sarabjeet Singh
<b>Internal Auditors</b>	Inderpal Singh Harnek Singh	Inderpal Singh Harnek Singh	Narinder Kaur Amarjit Singh Khaira

## SIWEC CHAIRMEN — FIRST 25 YEARS



**Dr Sorinder Singh**  
1995–2009



**Mr Jagjit Singh Sekhon**  
2009–2013



**Mr Amarjit Singh Wasan**  
2013–2015



**Mr Gurdip Singh Usma**  
2015–2021

# OUR DONORS

**We express our sincere gratitude to ALL donors whose unstinting support we truly salute and remain ever grateful for.**

SIWEC relies heavily on the regular donations and contributions received from Sikh institutions, members of the sangat, well-wishers and prominent Sikh community leaders whose philanthropy and support over these past 25 years has helped sustain and grow our programme operations and services to benefit our clients.

These donations are received in various modes: via monthly contributions from Sikh institutions; monthly Giro payments from about 300 donors who have signed up; internet donations via our website using the Paypal, Give.asia and Giving.sg platforms; as well as ad hoc donations or grants from well-wishers seeking to support a worthy cause.

More recently, we have established a presence on Giving.sg (<https://www.giving.sg/siwec>) and have also embraced using QR codes for donations during the recent 2020 Ride2Serve volunteer-led cycling fund-raising campaign in aid of SIWEC.

Regular SIWEC donors are kept updated on our activities and financial position through our SIWEC Insight newsletters and Annual Reports, which are available for download from the website ([www.siwec.org](http://www.siwec.org)).

SIWEC's strong financial standing is largely due to the steady flow of funds raised through the past decade. We humbly appeal to the sangat to donate periodically on a sustained basis so that SIWEC

continues to help the disadvantaged individuals and vulnerable families within the Singapore community to cope with the challenges they face. Giro forms are available on our website and at the SIWEC office on Level 6 of the CST building.

Please visit our website [www.siwec.org](http://www.siwec.org) or call our hotline at 6299 9234 to enquire further about our online donation channels.

Our sincere thanks again to all our donors and well-wishers, without whose generous support SIWEC would not be able to fulfil its mission to support those who needed help in difficult times.

Whilst every effort has been made to reflect the names of all donors from our available records, we sincerely apologise for any names that might have been inadvertently omitted.



## PATRON

KARTAR SINGH THAKRAL

## TRUSTEES

CHOO SINGH SIDHU  
DALJIT SINGH GAGGARBHANA  
GURCHARAN SINGH NARULA  
JAGJEET SINGH SEGHAL  
JAGJIT SINGH SEKHON  
KARTAR SINGH DALAMNANGAL  
MANMOHAN SINGH THAKRAL  
MAHN SINGH BAJAJ  
MOHINDER SINGH THAKRAL  
NARANJAN SINGH BRAHMPURA

## SIKH INSTITUTIONS

CENTRAL SIKH GURDWARA BOARD  
ISTERI SAT SANG – CST  
ISTERI SATSANG – SINGH SABHA  
ISTERI SATSANG – KATONG  
ISTERI SATSANG – SILAT ROAD  
KHALSA DHARMAK SABHA  
PARDESI KHALSA DHARMAK DIWAN  
SIKH MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
SIKH SEWAKS SINGAPORE  
SINGAPORE KHALSA ASSOCIATION  
SRI GURU NANAK SAT SANG SABHA  
SRI GURU SINGH SABHA  
YISHUN GURDWARA  
YOUNG SIKH ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE)

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

AKP COACH SERVICES PTE LTD  
ALKEMAL SINGAPORE PTE LTD  
ANBROS INDUSTRIES (S) PTE LTD  
ARIAN WORLDWIDE LOG PTE LTD  
ATOS WELLNESS PTE LTD  
CHARTERED ASSET MGMT PTE LTD  
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JARDINE SHIPPING SERVICES  
JASA INVESTIGATION & SVS PTE LTD  
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SISTERS  
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TULSI ONG TRUST  
UNIVERSAL PROCUREMENT SYSTEM PTE LTD  
VASVANI FAMILY  
W S RAM SINGH & CO (1985) PTE LTD

## INDIVIDUALS

A L PAKIMALAM  
 A RAFFI  
 A RAMACHANDRAN  
 A.L PAKIMALAM  
 AGARWAL BHAWNA  
 AGARWAL RAJ KUMAR  
 AGNES TAN  
 AHLUWALIA MEHTAB SINGH  
 AJIT SINGH  
 AJIT SINGH  
 AJIT SINGH GILL  
 AJIT SINGH S/O M S  
 AJITHA  
 AJITPAL SINGH  
 AKVINDER KAUR  
 ALAN HENG CHEE OOI  
 ALBEL SINGH  
 ALEX CHAN  
 ALICIA KOH  
 ALICIA LEE  
 ALINA TAN  
 AMAN KHARBANDA  
 AMANDEEP SINGH  
 AMAR KAUR  
 AMAR KAUR  
 AMAR KAUR MOGA  
 AMAR SINGH  
 AMARGID SINGH  
 AMARICK GILL  
 AMARJEET SINGH  
 AMARJEET SINGH BAL  
 AMARJIT KAUR  
 AMARJIT KAUR SIDHU  
 AMARJIT SINGH  
 AMARJIT SINGH  
 AMARJIT SINGH BAJWA  
 AMARJIT SINGH BAL

AMARJIT SINGH GREWAL  
 AMARJIT SINGH NARWAL S/O BANTA SINGH  
 AMARJIT SINGH S/O NARANJAN SINGH  
 AMARJIT SINGH WASAN  
 AMARPAL SINGH  
 AMARPAL SINGH  
 AMARPAL SINGH  
 AMARPARKESH SINGH  
 AMARPREET KAUR  
 AMEETPAL SINGH NARULLA  
 AMERJIT KAUR  
 AMIR HAMZAH  
 AMIT SINGH  
 AMREEK SINGH  
 AMREET KAUR D/O MAHA SINGH  
 AMRIK SINGH  
 AMRIT KAUR  
 AMRITA KAUR  
 AMRITPAL SINGH  
 AMRITPAL SINGH RANDHAWA  
 AMRITPAL SINGH SIDHU  
 ANANT BIR SINGH  
 ANDREA  
 ANDREW SCEATS  
 ANG YEOK WEE  
 ANIL SINGH SONA  
 ANITA  
 ANITA KUMARI D/O PREMNATH  
 ANTHONY GEOFFREY PEREIRA  
 ANTONIO RIVERO  
 ARULSELVI D/O SELVARAJU  
 ARUN ISSAR  
 ARVEEN KAUR  
 ARVINDAR KAUR  
 ARVINPAL KAUR  
 ARWINDER SINGH  
 ARWINDERJIT SINGH

ARWINDERPAL SINGH (A.P)  
 ASHAJIT KAUR  
 ASHIMA KESWANI  
 ASHISH KAUR CHANA  
 ASHOK BUXSANI  
 ASHUTOSH PATHAK  
 ASHWINI NAIR  
 ATMA SINGH  
 ATMA SINGH  
 AVALEEN KAUR MADAN  
 AVINDERPAL SINGH  
 AVINDERPAL SINGH  
 AVNI AGRIM  
 AVNISH DESAI  
 AVTAR SINGH  
 AVTAR SINGH BHULLAR  
 AVTAR SINGH GILL  
 AWTAR KAUR  
 AWTAR KAUR  
 B.S SIHOTA  
 BABITA DEOL AND REENA  
 BABY UNITY  
 BADOWAL FAMILY  
 BAHADUR KAUR  
 BAJAN KAUR  
 BAL BANT SINGH  
 BAL BRINDRA KAUR  
 BALAWANT KAUR  
 BALBEER SINGH MANGAT  
 BALBINDAR KAUR  
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 BALBIR SINGH CHAHAL  
 BALBIR SINGH S/O PRITAM SINGH  
 BALBIR SINGH S/O TEJA SINGH

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 BALDEVA KAUR  
 BALDHIRAJ SINGH  
 BALI KAUR SODHI  
 BALJIT KAUR  
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 BALVEER SINGH  
 BALVINDER KAUR  
 BALVINDER PAL SINGH CHAWLA  
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 BALWANT SINGH SIDHU  
 BALWINDER KAUR  
 BAMNODKAR ANURADHA ANIL  
 BARINDERGEET KAUR  
 BEDDY KEE  
 BELINDER KAUR  
 BELWANDER KAUR  
 BHAGAT SINGH  
 BHAGWANT KAUR  
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 BHAJAN KAUR  
 BHAJAN SINGH  
 BHAJAN SINGH SUROPADA  
 BHAJANVIR SINGH  
 BHAMBRI DIWAKAR  
 BHARAT MIRANCHADANI

BHOPINDER SINGH  
 BHRVINDER SINGH  
 BHUPINDER KAUR  
 BHUPINDER SINGH  
 BHUPINDER SINGH  
 BHUPINDERJIT SINGH  
 BIAANT SINGH  
 BIBI MENDRO  
 BIKAR SINGH  
 BIKRAM SINGH THAKRAL  
 BIKRAMJIT SINGH  
 BINAJIT KAUR SIDHU  
 BOB GILL  
 BOBBY BALBIR KAUR  
 C.N TAARUN  
 CATH DO  
 CATHERINE FONG  
 CECLIA LEOW  
 CEE JAY  
 CHAHAL SIMRANJIT SINGH  
 CHAN BOON KHENG  
 CHAN LAY ENG  
 CHANON SINGH  
 CHARAN KAUR  
 CHARANDEEP SINGH  
 CHARANJIT SINGH  
 CHARANJIT SINGH SAHNI  
 CHAREN SINGH  
 CHARLY MADAN  
 CHARNO KAUR W/O PAL SINGH RODE  
 CHARRUN KAUR  
 CHEE MENG  
 CHEN SHUANGHUI  
 CHEONG YEW SENG  
 CHHABRA VINIT  
 CHOPRA AMANDEEP SINGH  
 CHOPRA BABY

CHRISTIN CULME – SEYMOUR  
 CHRISTINE KONG  
 CHRISTOPHER  
 CHRISTOPHER ANAND S/O DANIEL  
 CHUA KOON LOI N FAMILY  
 CHUNG JEFFREY  
 CINDY  
 CN BAAGHAN  
 D MILNE  
 DAIL MOTUMAL SAMBWANI  
 DALBIR KAUR  
 DALJEET SINGH  
 DALJEET SINGH SUROPADA  
 DALIP KAUR  
 DALIP SINGH MALEIANA  
 DALJEET SINGH S/O HAKAM SINGH  
 DALJEET SINGH SIDHU  
 DALJIT SINGH  
 DALJIT SINGH  
 DALJIT SINGH S/O DARBARA SINGH  
 DALVINDER KAUR W/O BHAGAT SINGH  
 DALWANT SINGH  
 DANIEL VON BURG  
 DARSHAN SINGH  
 DARSHAN SINGH  
 DARSHAN SINGH GREWAL  
 DARSHAN SINGH PURAIN  
 DARSHAN SINGH VALTOHA  
 DAVID ANIL SHARMA  
 DAVID ROCK TONG CHIN  
 DAVID YAN  
 DAVINDER SINGH  
 DAVINDER SINGH S/O AMAR SINGH  
 DEDAR SINGH GILL  
 DEEP SINGH  
 DEEPAK KAMRAN  
 DENISE LIM



DEPUTY SINGH  
 DES KAUR  
 DEV BHALLA  
 DEV TANNA  
 DEVINDAR SINGH  
 DEVNANI AMIT DURGESH  
 DHALWANT KAUR  
 DHARMINDERJIT SINGH GILL  
 DHEERAJ CHANDRA  
 DHUPINDER KAUR  
 DILJEET KAUR  
 DILJIT KAUR  
 DILJIT SINGH  
 DILJIT SINGH ATHWAL  
 DINESH SINGH  
 DINESH SINGH DHALIWAL  
 DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYYA  
 DIVIJ CHOPRA  
 DO PIN PIN  
 DOREEN TAN  
 DURSAN SINGH  
 EUGENE LIM  
 EUGENE SAM  
 EVELYN LEONG  
 FOONG SOOK NAN  
 FRANCIS JOHN DASSON MANI  
 GANESH KANAPATHY JUNIOR  
 GARMEET SINGH  
 GARMIT KAUR D/O KARTAR SINGH  
 GEOFFREY PEREIRA  
 GERALD P FERNANDEZ  
 GIAN KAUR  
 GILBERT MADHAVAN  
 GIRISH VIRKAR  
 GOH CHAI PENG  
 GOLDY SINGH  
 GOPAL SINGH  
 GORBACHAN KAUR  
 GORMEJE SINGH KAIRON

GOUW KIM SAN  
 GUCHARAN SINGH  
 GULSAN KAUR  
 GURBACHAN KAUR  
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 GURCHARN SINGH  
 GURDAVE SINGH  
 GURDEB KAUR  
 GURDEEP SINGH  
 GURDESH KAUR  
 GURDEV KAUR D/O HARNAAM SINGH  
 GURDEV SINGH  
 GURDEV SINGH S/O AJIT SINGH  
 GURDEV SINGH S/O SLAKHAN SINGH  
 GURDIP S/O HAZARA SINGH  
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 GURDIP SINGH  
 GURDIP SINGH  
 GURDIP SINGH USMA  
 GURJEET SINGH  
 GURJIT KAUR  
 GURMEET ISSAR  
 GURMEET SINGH  
 GURMEET SINGH BAJAJ  
 GURMINDER KAUR  
 GURMIR SINGH MOGA  
 GURMIT KAUR  
 GURMIT KAUR

GURMIT KAUR  
 GURMIT KAUR SROYA  
 GURMIT SINGH  
 GURMIT SINGH  
 GURMIT SINGH S/O JERNAYAL SINGH  
 GURPAL SINGH BAREWALA  
 GURPREET SINGH  
 GURPREET SINGH  
 GURPREET SINGH DHILLION  
 GURSHARAN KAUR  
 GURSHARAN KAUR D/O MANJIT SINGH  
 GURSHARAN KAUR SANDHU  
 GURSHARAN SINGH  
 GURSHARAN SINGH  
 GURSHEEL KAUR DHILLON  
 GURSURAJ SINGH BRAR  
 GURVINDER KAUR  
 GURVINDER SIDHU  
 HAIRUL  
 HAKIRAT SINGH S/O HARNEK SINGH  
 HARAPAJAN SINGH  
 HARAWANT SINGH  
 HARBAHJAN SINGH  
 HARBAHJAN SINGH GHOSAL  
 HARBANS KAUR  
 HARBANS KAUR  
 HARBANS SINGH  
 HARBANS SINGH  
 HARBANS SINGH  
 HARBANS SINGH  
 HARBHAJAN KAUR  
 HARBHAJAN SINGH  
 HARBHAJAN SINGH  
 HARCHARAN KAUR  
 HARDAVE SINGH DHALIWAL  
 HARDAYAL KAUR  
 HARDEEP SINGH  
 HARDEEP SINGH  
 HARDEEP SINGH  
 HARDESH SINGH

HARDEV KAUR  
 HARDEV SINGH GILL  
 HARDEV SINGH MAAN  
 HARDIAL SINGH KHEDI  
 HAREENDERPAL SINGH  
 HARGINDER SINGH  
 HARGOBIND SINGH  
 HARINDER KAUR  
 HARISH NIM  
 HARJEET SINGH  
 HARJEET SINGH  
 HARJEET SINGH  
 HARJEET SINGH RIKHRAJ  
 HARJINDER SINGH  
 HARJINDER SINGH  
 HARJINDER SINGH S/O JEET SINGH  
 HARJINDER SINGH S/O NARANJAN INGH  
 HARJIT KAUR  
 HARJIT KAUR  
 HARJIT KAUR  
 HARJIT SINGH  
 HARKIRAN SANDHU  
 HARKRISHAN SINGH  
 HARLEEN KAUR  
 HARLEEN KAUR  
 HARLEEN WALIA  
 HARMAN PREET SINGH REEN  
 HARMEET SINGH  
 HARMINDER KAUR  
 HARMINDER SINGH  
 HARMIT SINGH  
 HARMIT SINGH  
 HARMIT SINGH (MRS) NEE G. KAUR  
 HARMIT SINGH GANDHI  
 HARMIT SINGH SANDHU  
 HARNAM SINGH  
 HARNEK SINGH S/O TARA SINGH  
 HAROINDERJIT SINGH  
 HARPAL SINGH BAJAJ

HARPAL SINGH SIDHU  
 HARPHAL SINGH  
 HARPHAL SINGH  
 HARPHAL SINGH  
 HARPHAL SINGH  
 HARPHAL SINGH SINDHU  
 HARPREET BHASIA  
 HARPREET KAUR  
 HARPREET KAUR D/O CHANCEL SINGH  
 HARPREET KAUR D/O DARSHAN SINGH  
 HARPREET SINGH  
 HARPREET SINGH CHANA  
 HARPRITPAL SINGH SAGOO  
 HARSEWAK SINGH  
 HARSHA  
 HARSIMAR KAUR  
 HARTEJINDER SINGH  
 HARVEEN SINGH NARULA  
 HARVIND KAUR  
 HARVINDER SINGH GREWAL  
 HARWANDER KAUR D/O KARTAR SINGH  
 HARWANT KAUR  
 HARWINDER KAUR  
 HARWINDER SINGH BHATIA  
 HERDIAL SINGH  
 HERNAIKH SINGH  
 HERSHARAN KAUR  
 HERWENDER SINGH  
 HERWINDER KAUR  
 HIEW CHAI SIN  
 HIMAT SINGH S/O VEER SINGH  
 HIMMAT SINGH S/O M S  
 HO HOON HOW  
 IAN TYMMS  
 IKBAL SINGH  
 INDA KAUR D/O BUR SINGH  
 INDER JIT SINGH  
 INDER KAUR  
 INDER MOHAN SINGH

INDERBIR SINGH  
 INDERJIT KAUR  
 INDERJIT KAUR  
 INDERJIT KAUR  
 INDERJIT SINGH  
 INDERJIT SINGH  
 INDERJIT SINGH  
 INDERJIT SINGH KHOSA  
 INDERJIT SINGH NARULA  
 INDERPAL KAUR  
 INDERPAL SINGH  
 INDERPREET KAUR  
 INDIRA DEVI  
 INDREJIT KAUR  
 INDREJIT SINGH RIKHRAJ  
 IRENE PNG  
 ISHWAR LALL SINGH  
 ISHWINDER KAUR D/O JASVINDER SINGH  
 ISKANDER SINGH S/O SURJAN SINGH  
 IVAN SEOW  
 J C CHONG  
 JAGAJIT KAUR  
 JAGDEV SINGH GILL  
 JAGDISH KAUR  
 JAGDISH KAUR  
 JAGDISH KAUR  
 JAGDISH SINGH  
 JAGDISH SINGH S/O KARTAR SINGH  
 JAGEER SINGH  
 JAGJIR SINGH S/O LAB SINGH  
 JAGJIT SINGH  
 JAGJIT SINGH  
 JAGJIT SINGH S/O B S  
 JAGJIT SINGH S/O JOGINDER SINGH  
 JAGJIT SINGH SEKHON  
 JAGMANDAR  
 JAGTAR SINGH  
 JAGWINDER SINGH  
 JAI RAJ SINGH BAL

JANARDAN RAI  
 JANGIR KAUR  
 JANICE LOW  
 JAPINDER SINGH  
 JARMAL SINGH  
 JARNAIL SINGH  
 JARNAL SINGH JAMARAI  
 JASBINDER KAUR  
 JASBIR SINGH  
 JASBIR SINGH S/O BALBIR SINGH  
 JASBIR SINGH SEGAL  
 JASBIR SINGH SUROPADA  
 JASDEEP SINGH BAJAJ  
 JASDEEP SINGH SANDHU  
 JASHANDEEP SINGH  
 JASMAIL SINGH KHALSA  
 JASMEET KAUR  
 JASMIN JOHAL  
 JASMIN KAUR  
 JASMINDER KAUR  
 JASMINDER SINGH  
 JASMINDER KAUR D/O CHANNAN SINGH  
 JASMINDER SINGH GHOLIA  
 JASON SINGH  
 JASPAL KAUR  
 JASPAL SINGH SIDHU  
 JASPREET KAUR  
 JASPREET KAUR D/O PIARA SINGH  
 JASPREET SINGH CHHABRA  
 JASSIE HASSARAM  
 JASVEENA KAUR LEIL  
 JASVINDER KAUR  
 JASVINDER KAUR  
 JASVINDER SINGH  
 JASVINDER SINGH  
 JASVINDER SINGH GILL S/O JAGJIT SINGH  
 JASVINPAL SINGH  
 JASVIR PANDHER

JASWANT KAUR  
 JASWANT SINGH  
 JASWANT SINGH  
 JASWANT SINGH  
 JASWANT SINGH  
 JASWANT SINGH  
 JASWANT SINGH  
 JASWANT SINGH  
 JASWANT SINGH BANDAL  
 JASWANT SINGH GILL  
 JASWINDER KAUR  
 JASWINDER KAUR  
 JASWINDER SINGH  
 JASWINDER SINGH  
 JASWINDER SINGH BATH S/O JASWANT SINGH  
 JATINDER PAUL SINGH  
 JATINDER SINGH  
 JEANNY NG  
 JEET SINGH S/O MANGAL SINGH  
 JEETO KAUR  
 JEETU MAHTANI  
 JEISPREIT KAUR BAJAJ  
 JENNIFER OH  
 JERIN JACOB  
 JERNAIL SINGH  
 JESBINDAR KAUR  
 JESVIN KAUR D/O BALDEV SINGH  
 JINDERPAL KAUR  
 JINIKA OH GUEK LENG  
 JIT SINGH S/O HARNAM SINGH CHEEMA  
 JITENDER ARORA  
 JITENDRA BHARAT AMESAR  
 JOGINDER DAS  
 JOGINDER KAUR  
 JOGINDER SINGH  
 JOGINDER SINGH  
 JOHATHAN. P  
 JOHNY CHIN  
 JUSPAL SINGH

JUSTINDER SINGH  
 K MUTHU  
 K S AMARJIT SINGH BAL  
 K. SHENDEEPAN  
 KABIR SINGH  
 KAKA SINGH  
 KALDIP KAUR D/O HARDIAL SINGH  
 KALSVAPANY S/O KRISHNASAMY  
 KALVINDER SINGH  
 KALWANT SINGH  
 KAMAL KANTA  
 KAMALJIT KAUR  
 KANAIL KAUR  
 KANWALJEET SINGH S/O JASWANT SINGH  
 KANWALJIT KAUR CHYLE  
 KANWALJIT SOIN  
 KARAM MOHANJIT KAUR  
 KARAM SINGH  
 KARAM VEER SINGH  
 KARAMJEET SINGH  
 KARAMJEET SINGH BRAR  
 KARAMJIT KAUR  
 KARAMJIT SINGH  
 KARAMJIT SINGH NARULA  
 KARAMJIT SINGH S/O AMAR SINGH  
 KARAMJIT SINGH S/O HARBANS SINGH  
 KARAMJIT SINGH S/O TERLOK SINGH  
 KARAMPAL SINGH SIDHU  
 KARMGEET KAUR  
 KARNAIL SINGH  
 KARTAR KAUR D/O JAGAR SINGH  
 KARTAR SINGH  
 KARTAR SINGH FAMILY  
 KARTAR SINGH SIDHU  
 KARTAR SINGH THAKRAL  
 KASHMINDER SINGH  
 KASHMIR KAUR  
 KASHMIR SINGH  
 KASHMIR SINGH SUROPADA



KASI SANKAR	KULWANT KAUR	LEONG WENG PIEW
KAWAL PAL SINGH	KULWANT KAUR	LIM KHAR ENG
KAWAL PREET KAUR	KULWANT KAUR	LIM PEN HOE MELVIN
KAY KAUR	KULWANT SINGH	LIN XIUXIA
KERNAL KAUR W/O LATE S. ARJAN SINGH	KULWANT SINGH	LOGAN JS RODRICKS
KERTAR SINGH	KULWANT SINGH BARDH	LOH YAN POH
KESHVINDER KAUR CHAHAL	KUMAR	LOKE KAI MENG
KESHVINDER SINGH	KUMAR S/O SUNDAM	LONNIE TAN
KEVAL SINGH	KUNALBIR SINGH CHAHL	LOW CHEONG KEE
KEVIN JIT SINGH	KWA HWEE KENG	LUCK SINGH
KHAW WAI MENG	LAKHBIR SINGH	LUVINDERPAL SINGH
KIRAN RAMCHAND SAMTANI	LAKHBIR SINGH	M GANESH
KIRAN SONIA KAUR	LAKHBIR SINGH	M THIYAGARAJAN
KIRANDEEP KAUR BAJAJ	LAKHMIR SINGH	MADAN MOHAN SINGH
KIRANJEET KAUR	LALWANI HARESH RAMCHAND	MADHUSUDAN M. PATEL
KIRPAL KAUR	LALWANI POONAM	MAH SINGH
KIRPAL SINGH	LARA CHANDRAMANI	MAHA SINGH
KIRPAL SINGH	LASHMAN SINGH	MAHESHINDER SINGH
KIRPAL SINGH	LATE AWTAR SINGH SINGRIWAL	MAHINDER SINGH
KIRPAL SINGH SIDHU	LATE BALJIT SINGH	MAHINDER SINGH S/O DALJIT SINGH
KOBAYAH KAYO	LATE GURDEV SINGH S/O MANGAT SINGH	MALKEET SINGH
KOH MEI LENG MARYANN	LATE JAGJIT SINGH S/O SUCHA SINGH	MALKEET SINGH S/O JA
KOK POH MENG	LATE JASWANT SINGH	MALKIT KAUR
KOR SINGH SANGHA	LATE JASWANT SINGH BHATHAL	MALKIT KAUR
KOWSULA KAUR	LATE KEIRPAL KAUR	MALMINDERJIT SINGH
KRISHNASWAMY BADRI NARANYAN	LATE LEE SOY NYA	MALVINDER JIT SINGH GILL
KRISTEN RICHISSIN	LATE MEHAR SINGH NARULA	MALVINDER SINGH
KULBIR SINGH	LATE NIHAL KAUR RODE	MALVINDER SINGH BANDAL
KULDEEP SINGH VARMA	LATE PURAN KAUR	MALWINDER SINGH SANGER
KULDIP KAUR	LATE RANJIT KAUR	MANDEEP
KULDIP SINGH	LATE SARDARA SINGH & LATE GURDEV KAUR	MANDEEP KAUR
KULDIP SINGH	LATE SURJAN SINGH	MANDEEP SINGH
KULDIP SINGH	LATE TEJ PARTAP SINGH CHOPRA	MANINDER SINGH GILL S/O HIMMAT SINGH GILL
KULDIP SINGH	LAU QUEK HWA ALICE	MANJEET KAUR
KULGIT SINGH	LEE CHONG	MANJEET SINGH
KULJINDAR KAUR	LEE CP	MANJEET SINGH WALEH
KULRAJ SINGH SAINI	LEE MARTIGAN	MANJIT GILL
KULSHAN SINGH	LEE SAW LIN	MANJIT KAUR
KULTAR SINGH	LEON FOO	MANJIT KAUR

MANJIT KAUR  
 MANJIT KAUR  
 MANJIT KAUR  
 MANJIT KOUR  
 MANJIT SINGH  
 MANJIT SINGH  
 MANJIT SINGH  
 MANJIT SINGH GELLON  
 MANJIT SINGH GILL  
 MANJIT SINGH GILL  
 MANJIT SINGH MAKKAR  
 MANJIT SINGH MAKHAN SINGH  
 MANJIT SINGH MALIAN SINGH  
 MANJIT SINGH RANDHAWA  
 MANJIT SINGH SEVEA  
 MANJIT SINGH S/O MAHINDER SINGH  
 MANJOT KAUR  
 MANJU B SADHWANI  
 MANJULA  
 MANKIRAN KAUR  
 MANMEET KAUR  
 MANMEET SINGH  
 MANMEET SINGH BHATIA  
 MANMEETPAL SINGH  
 MANMOHAN KAUR  
 MANMOHAN SINGH  
 MANMOHAN SINGH  
 MANMOHAN SINGH  
 MANMOHAN SINGH  
 MANMOHAN SINGH  
 MANMOHAN SINGH BESSI  
 MANMOHANJEET KAUR D/O ANOKH SINGH  
 MANMOHANJIT KAUR  
 MANPREET SINGH  
 MANPREET SINGH BAJAJ  
 MANPRIT KAUR DHILLION  
 MANRAJ SINGH SEKHON  
 MANTHIR SINGH/ JASWANT SINGH  
 MARIAN YEO

MARINE BOURGEOIS POTEL  
 MAVINDER SINGH  
 MEGHNA TRIPATHI  
 MEHTAB  
 MEJAR SINGH GILL  
 MEJO  
 MEL JUDGE MADAS  
 MELVINDER SINGH  
 MELVINDER SINGH  
 MELVINDER SINGH  
 MERIK SINGH  
 MERIR SINGH  
 MICHAEL JOHN PRICE  
 MICHAEL KOH HOCK HENG  
 MILKEET SINGH  
 MINGER KAUR  
 MOHAN SINGH  
 MOHAN SINGH  
 MOHAN SINGH  
 MOHINDER KAUR  
 MOHINDER SINGH  
 MOHINDER SINGH PADRI  
 MOHINDER SINGH THAKRAL  
 MOHINDERJEET KAUR  
 MOHIT KHURANA  
 MOIRA ROBERTSON  
 MONGKOL VIJARAMA  
 MOTI HARKISHINDAS BHOJWANI  
 MUK WAI SENH  
 MUKESH KUMAR  
 MUKHTAR SINGH RIARD  
 MUKHTAR SINGH S/O S. SOHAN SINGH  
 MUKHTIAR SINGH  
 MUKTIAR SINGH  
 MUNJIT KAUR  
 NACHATAR SINGH SANDHU  
 NALINI RAO  
 NARANJAN SINGH  
 NARINDER KAUR DHILLON

NARINDER SINGH  
 NARINDER SINGH USMA  
 NARINDERPREET KAUR  
 NARINPAL SINGH PUHAR  
 NASEEB KAUR  
 NATASHA SABNANI  
 NAVENDER PAL SINGH  
 NAVIN PRABHU RAJAGOBAL  
 NAVINDER KAUR BAJAJ  
 NAVNEET BAJWA  
 NAVNEK SINGH S/O HARNEKH SINGH  
 NAVTEJ SINGH  
 NEERAJ  
 NEETA BAJAJ  
 NELVINDER KAUR D/O TARLOK SINGH  
 NEO AH SWEE  
 NERMAL KAUR  
 NG WEI MIN  
 NICOLA SHAW  
 NIGEL DILIP SINGH GILL  
 NIJINDER PAL SHARMA  
 NIRMAL SINGH  
 NIRMAL SINGH  
 NIRMAL SINGH  
 NIRMAL SINGH  
 NIRMAL SINGH SATHIALA  
 NIRMAN SINGH SODHI  
 OBHAN DILPREET SINGH  
 ONG MUI HUAY  
 P. LIEW  
 PALO D/O VEKET SINGH  
 PALVINDAR SINGH  
 PAMINDER SINGH  
 PANDER IMRISH SINGH  
 PANKAJ ORACLE  
 PARAM AJEET SINGH BAL  
 PARAMJEE SINGH  
 PARAMJEET KAUR  
 PARAMJEET SINGH

PARAMJEET SINGH S/O GURBACHAN SINGH	PRABHJIT SINGH PANU	RAJINDER SINGH
PARAMJIT KAUR	PRABJEET SINGH ANAND	RAJINDERPAL SINGH
PARAMJIT SINGH	PRAMOOK MARK	RAJPAL SINGH USMA
PARAMJIT SINGH	PRASHANT AGGARWAL	RAJWINDER SINGH
PARAMJIT SINGH	PRAVAL BANSAL	RAM MACHANDRAN
PARAMJYOT SINGH	PREM NAIR	RAMESH PREMNATH
PARDEEP SINGH	PREMA	RANBIR SINGH REKRAJ
PARDEEP SINGH KHOSA	PREMA IRANGANI	RANDEEP KAUR
PARKASH SINGH S/O PURAN SINGH	PREMALATTHA SADHASIVAN	RANDEEP SINGH AUJLA
PARMINDER KAUR	PREMJEET SINGH	RANI
PARMINDER KAUR	PREMNATH S/O SHIUDIAL	RANI MACHANDA
PARMINDER SINGH	PRENTHIRU RAJ MANE	RANIE
PARMJIT KAUR	PRERNA SINGH MEHROT	RANJEET SINGH SIBIA
PARVEEN KAUR	PRETOR KAUR @ SARJIT KAUR	RANJIT SINGH
PARVEEN KAUR	PRITAM KAUR	RANJIT SINGH
PARVINDAR SINGH	PRITAM KAUR	RANJIT SINGH
PARVINDER SINGH	PRITAM KAUR	RANJIT SINGH WAHLA
PARVINDERJEET KAUR D/O HARBHAJAN SINGH	PRITAM SINGH	RANJIT SINGH DHALIWAL
PATHMA	PRITAM SINGH DOMBURU	RANJIT SINGH S/O BACHAN SINGH
PATHMANATHAN G.V	PRITAM SINGH GILL	RANJIT SINGH S/O SARJIT SINGH
PAUL AMAR SINGH	PRITAM SINGH S/O NARANJAN SINGH	RANJIT SINGH S/O SWARANT SINGH
PAVANJIT SINGH	PRITPAL SINGH	RANJIT SINGH VAHAN
PAVITER SINGH	QUAH LEE KIANG	RANJODH SINGH
PAVITER SINGH BAJAJ	R S MINHAS	RANVIR SINGH
PAWA PARDEEP KUMAR	ROBERTSON	RASHPAL KAUR
PAWANDEEP KAUR	RABINDER SINGH	RASHPAL SINGH
PAWANPREET SINGH	RAFFIEE B JURAIMI	RASHPAL SINGH
PAWINDER SINGH	RAHUL	RASHPAL SINGH
PEGGY ZEE	RAHUL NARGOTRA	RASHPAL SINGH S/O PIARA SINGH (EDDY)
PERMINDER KAUR	RAHUL MUKHERJI	RASPHAL BHATTI
PERMJIT KAUR	RAJBIR SINGH THAKRAL	RATAN SARYMANI
PERMJIT SINGH	RAJDEV N.	RATANESH KAUR BAL
PERSAN KAUR D/O TAHIL SINGH	RAJEEV HASSAMAL	RAVIN JASTOL
PERSAN KAUR JASTAUL	RAJENDER SINGH	RAVINDER KAUR
PETER BHASI	RAJESH RADHAKRISHNAN NAIR	RAVINDER SINGH
PETER RAYAPPAN	RAJESH SINGH DHILLON	RAVINDER SINGH
PIARA SINGH	RAJESH SINGH GILL	RAVINDER SINGH
POOBALAN KANNAN	RAJESHPAL SINGH	RAVINDER SINGH JOGJEE
POOJA	RAJINDER SINGH	REBECCA LIAN



REENA KAUR  
 RENU MAHAJAN  
 RESHAM SINGH  
 RESHMI SINGH  
 RICKY  
 RINTU BHALLA  
 RITA ROOP KAUR  
 RITU AURORA  
 ROBB EUAN WILLIAM  
 RODNEY CHUA  
 ROHAN KUMAR UMESH KUMAR BAHRI  
 ROSHEN JOSEPH  
 RUBIN SINGH  
 SACHAN AND MELVIN  
 SAJANI  
 SALWINDER SINGH  
 SAMIR KUMAR JAIN  
 SAMMI LOAM YOKE YEEN  
 SAMTANI FAMILY  
 SANDEEP KAUR  
 SANDEEP SINGH  
 SANDEEP SINGH DHAMI  
 SANDEEP SINGH UBEROI  
 SANDEEV SINGH CHOPRA  
 SANDY LOK  
 SANGAH RANJIT SINGH  
 SANJEET SINGH SANDHU  
 SANJEEV SINGH  
 SANTHEEP SINGH  
 SANTOKH SINGH  
 SAPNA SADARANGANI  
 SAPURAN SINGH  
 SARABJEET KAUR  
 SARABJEET SINGH  
 SARAFEEEN KAUR TWINKY  
 SARANJIT KAUR  
 SARANJIT SINGH  
 SARANJIT SINGH SAINI  
 SARANPAL SINGH

SARANPAL SINGH KHAIRA  
 SARBAN SINGH  
 SARBHJEET SINGH  
 SARBHPREET SINGH SAWHNEY  
 SARDOOL SINGH S/O BALJIT SINGH  
 SARGIT KAUR GILL  
 SARINAJIT KAUR  
 SARJIT KAUR  
 SARJIT KAUR  
 SARJIT KAUR D/O MUKHTIAR SINGH  
 SARJIT KAUR GILL SYDNEY  
 SARJIT KAUR KHOSA  
 SARJIT SINGH  
 SARJIT SINGH BASANT  
 SARMUKH SINGH  
 SARVJIT SINGH  
 SARWAN SINGH  
 SATINDER SINGH  
 SATINDER SINGH GARCIA  
 SATISH RAJMOHAN  
 SATPAL SINGH  
 SATVINDER SINGH  
 SATVINDER SINGH BHANDAL  
 SATVINDER SINGH S/O AVTAR SINGH  
 SATWANT SINGH  
 SATWANT SINGH  
 SATWANT SINGH  
 SATWANT SINGH  
 SATWANT SINGH SIDHU  
 SAVINDRA SINGH SHAHOO  
 SAWHNEY AMITOI PAL SINGH  
 SEAN KUAN THYE  
 SEEMA KAKAR  
 SEETAL KAUR  
 SEETAL KAUR RANDHAWA  
 SELINA  
 SERMIT KAUR  
 SHAANJEET KAUR  
 SHAGUN KALRA

SHAH ERWAN  
 SHAKANDER SINGH  
 SHAKTI AMRICK  
 SHARAN KAUR  
 SHARANJIT KAUR  
 SHARANJIT KAUR  
 SHARANJIT KAUR  
 SHARINDEV  
 SHARMILPAL KAUR  
 SHARN BEDI  
 SHARONJEET KAUR  
 SHASHANK HARGARA  
 SHEELA PRIMALANI D/O KISHINCHAND  
 SHEERA SINGH SANDHA  
 SHEILA RANJIT KAUR  
 SHERANPAL KAUR  
 SHERATPAL SINGH  
 SHERMAN SURESH SINGH KEEJOH SINGH  
 SHERMINH KAUR  
 SHINDER KAUR  
 SHOEB BURHANUDDIN  
 SIMER NARULLA  
 SIMERJIT SINGH  
 SIMHA KAUR JASTOL  
 SIMRAN JOHL  
 SIMRAN KAUR  
 SIMRAN KAUR BANDAL  
 SIMRANJIT KAUR  
 SIMRANJIT SINGH  
 SIMRANPAL SINGH  
 SINA  
 SINGH DIPU DAMAN  
 SITA KAUR  
 SIVABALAN  
 SO LYN MEYER  
 SOHINDER SINGH BAJAJ  
 SOKHJEET KAUR  
 SONIAJEET KAUR  
 SOPHIE LENEVEU

SORINDER SINGH  
SORINTHER KAUR JOTHIRAMBUL  
SORJAN SINGH  
SOUKDEV SINGH  
SOWAEN KAUR  
SPARSHDEEP SINGH  
STEVEN LIM KEE THUAN  
SUBIR SINGH PANOO  
SUBRAMANIAM JAYASEELAN  
SUCHITRA ANIL KHURANA  
SUKHBIR KAUR  
SUKHBIR SANDHU  
SUKHBIR SINGH  
SUKHBIR SINGH S/O GERNAIL SINGH  
SUKHDEV KAUR  
SUKHDEV KAUR  
SUKHDEV SINGH  
SUKHDEV SINGH  
SUKHDEVI KAUR  
SUKHDIAL SINGH  
SUKHJEET SINGH SEKHON  
SUKHPAL KAUR  
SUKHVINDER SINGH GILL  
SUKHWINDER KAUR  
SUKHWINDER KAUR  
SUKHWINDER SINGH  
SUKVINDER SINGH  
SUMAN CHOWDHURY  
SUMATHI POOBALAN  
SUNIL SINGH  
SUNIL SINGH PANOO  
SUPREET KAUR GILL  
SURESH NAIR  
SURESH RAJMINHAS  
SURESH RALANI  
SURINDAR KAUR  
SURINDAR KAUR  
SURINDAR SINGH  
SURINDER KAUR

SURINDER KAUR CHAHIL  
SURINDER PAL SINGH  
SURINDER SANJAY SINGH  
SURINDER SINGH DHILLON  
SURINDER SINGH SIDHU  
SURINDERJIT SINGH  
SURINDERPAL SINGH  
SURJAN SINGH  
SURJIT KAUR  
SURJIT KAUR KALRA  
SURJIT SINGH  
SURJIT SINGH  
SURJIT SINGH  
SURJIT SINGH GILL  
SURJIT SINGH TOOR  
SURJIT SINGH WASAN  
SURJIT SINGH WASAN  
SUSANAH OHORELLA BINTE YUSOF  
SUSANNA EE  
SUSHEEL KAUR  
SUVINDER KAUR  
SUVINDER SINGH BAJAJ  
SUVINDERJIT KAUR  
SWARAN KUMAR KAPUR  
SWARAN SINGH  
SWARNJIT KAUR  
SYDNEY MICHAEL HWANG  
SYED HASAN ALATTAS FAMILY  
T DONNELLY  
TAN CHENG HONG  
TAN CHOON MENG FRANCIS  
TAN GEOK TIN  
TAN KIAN GUAN  
TAN KIAN TAT  
TANIA IVA JONES  
TARA SINGH  
TARANJIT SINGH GREWAL  
TARIO SALEIM  
TEGHJEET NARULA

TEJINDER SINGH  
TEJINDERDEB SINGH GILL  
TEJPAL SINGH  
TEJPAL SINGH SANDHU  
TERENCE HENG KENG SUE  
TERINDER SINGH  
THANGAVELU RAJA SEGAR  
THASNEE SINGH  
TINA  
TINDER CHANDIRAMANI  
TOH BAO EN  
TRICIA FOK  
TZAN BIN SIDEK  
UJAGAR SINGH GILL  
UTTAM SINGH  
UTTAM SINGH S/O BAKHSHISH SINGH  
VAJDEV SINGH  
VARINDER SINGH  
VASANTHAN  
VEDANT GANESH  
VIJAY PARTAP RAI  
VIKAS SHARMA  
VIMALJIT KAUR  
VINAY POOJA  
VINEET MEHRA  
VIR KAUR  
VIRENDER SINGH MEHTA  
WANG CHEW JUAT  
WILFRED DIEPEVEEN  
WONG CHEE MENG  
WONG YEN NEE  
YAP SWEE CHENG  
YEN LING LEE  
YEOH CHENG POH  
YVONNE GOMEZ  
ZOE BOON SUAN LOY  
ZUBINN TAN

# REFERENCES

The Editorial team conducted various interviews with the pioneers and current people involved in SIWEC and have made reference to various reports, books, articles newsletters and other relevant materials in the search for information for this publication.

We have listed below a summary of the references used.

## Reports & Documents

- 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Republic of Singapore and the Launching of the Punjabi/Sikh Welfare Council on 14 October 1995 Souvenir Magazine – *by Sikh Advisory Board, Singapore Sikh Education Foundation and Singapore Sikh Resource Panel.*
- Report of the Task Force on the Sikh Welfare Council dated 12 May 2008 – *by Inderjit Singh (Chairman), Surjit Singh, Jarmal Singh, Amarjit Singh, Hernaikh Singh and Dr Narinder Kaur.*
- Vesakhi 99 Dinner on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1999 Souvenir Magazine – *by the Singapore Vesakhi 99 Organising Committee.*
- The Singapore Sikh Education Foundation at 30: its Teaching and Learning Journey – *by Singapore Sikh Education Foundation.*

## News Articles from Archives

- Newspaper articles in The Straits Times and Business Times extracted from the National, Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) and National Library archives. The publication names, dates and writers of these articles and photos (where applicable) are credited respectively where they appear in this publication.

## SIWEC Publications & Documents

- Sarbat da Bhalla: March 2008
- Minutes of SIWEC Meetings: 2008–present
- Annual Reports: 2010–present
- Audited Financial Statements: 2007–present
- SIWEC Insight Newsletters: 2010–2021
- SIWEC Sunehri Sahelian Magazines
- SIWEC Flyers and other marketing material

## Interviews and Inputs

- Sorinder Singh (Pioneer SIWEC Chairman)
- Bhajan Singh Suropada (Former SAB Chairman and Former SIWEC Vice-Chairman)
- Amarjit Singh Wasan (Former SIWEC Chairman)
- Gurdip Singh Usma (Current SIWEC Chairman)
- Mejar Singh Gill (Former SANA Sikhs Counselling Chairman)
- Manjit Singh Sevea (Organiser, Cycling events)
- Diljit Singh Athwal (Organiser, Cycling events)
- Jasbir Singh Suropada (Pioneer SIWEC staff)
- Indrejit Kaur (Pioneer SIWEC staff)
- Ranjit Singh Wahla (Current SIWEC Staff)



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SIKH WELFARE COUNCIL  
*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*  
(1995-2020)

