

## Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriages (NAAFM)

The **South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)** is coordinating a project focused on addressing the myriad social, political, and legal issues concerning the practice of forced or non-consensual marriages, particularly as it impacts young people.

### What is a forced marriage?

A forced marriage is one that takes place without the free consent of the individuals getting married. Forced marriage can happen to anyone; of any gender, of any age.

The ultimate aim of the project is to create a means to encourage dialogue and build accountability on the part of social service agencies, educational institutes, youth organizations, policy makers, media, the immigration and justice systems and community members in responding to the issue of forced marriages in ways that address and do not perpetuate racism, gender oppression, and other forms of violence.

The Forced Marriage Project at SALCO denounces the threat of, as well as, forced, non-consensual marriage, and commits to identifying strategies that promote the safety, security, and right to freely choose marriage for all individuals.

The Forced Marriages Project, this year, is focused on creating community education materials, a toolkit for frontline caseworkers, and a website to advise Ontarians about the issues surrounding a forced marriage and the resources available to respond to forced marriage (FM) cases.

We would like to invite your organization to partner in our efforts by contributing as a member on the 'Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriages.' The NAAFM will act as a multi-agency community resource to provide immediate and responsible assistance to clients facing a forced marriage. We expect NAAFM members to be

- Working or interested in working on the issue of forced marriages
- Participate in either the Advisory Committee or Community training
- Willing to provide contact information as a resource
- Has/ will have a staff member(s) available to respond to FM cases

As an organisation that is engaged in violence prevention initiatives, we request your participation to enhance our ability to meet the needs of communities we serve.

The first '**Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriages**' will be held on February 26, 2010.

For further details and to answer any questions that you may have about the project and participation in NAAFM please contact, Ritu Chokshi, Forced Marriages Project Coordinator at (416) 487 6371 or via email at [ritu@salc.on.ca](mailto:ritu@salc.on.ca).

We appreciate your support and look forward to working with you.