This report is for the survivors who are committed to realizing their own dreams and to the frontline caregivers who dedicate their time to achieving justice, every day.

Thank you for carrying this movement forward in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  5
ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE  6
ABOUT SAKHI  7
OUR APPROACH TO PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE  8
OUR 2021 IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS  11
2021 MOMENTS TO REMEMBER  12
RESPONDING TO CRISIS WITH CARE  13
2021 IN REVIEW: BUILDING, RENEWING, HEALING, AND INVESTING  16
OUR TEAM  18
DEFYING LIMITS IN 2022  19
THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS  20
FINANCIAL OUTLOOK  21
CONGRATULATIONS!

Sakhi celebrates two of our very own staff members for being honored as 2023 Advocates of New York City by the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence!

SWETA SAHI
Executive Director/Program Manager

PRIA SIRAL
Program Development Manager

TUNE IN TUESDAY

UPLIFTING SURVIVOR POWER ON TBN24

A conversation with NYT gender columnist, Afshin Hadiasani Guptas, and writer artist, and producer, Tanya Selvaratnam.

In My Voice

Sakhi believes that survivor resilience is a unifying force for collective action. As storytelling brings us together and drives our movement, we invite survivors to share their stories with the community in their voices. Sakhi will be featuring these stories on our public platforms throughout Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
**Dear Friends,**

We began this year reflecting deeply on our work and organization, namely, how we had been coping with and strategically overcoming crises throughout 2020. We considered what survivors, our team, and our community needed from us, and how we could best respond to those needs.

**We knew that we needed to address high unemployment rates, affordable housing shortages, and the rising incidence of mental illness—all of which exacerbate the probability of violence occurring.**

Every survivor who comes through our doors has their own story, and every survivor’s journey toward safety and self-actualization has become even more complex during the COVID-19 pandemic, with new challenges arising each day.

In looking to our team, it is critical to note that we see the work of violence prevention all around us, through an intersectional lens. **Our vocation is often tied deeply to our lived experience.** Our layered identities—whether as survivors, immigrants, or historically-oppressed individuals of all genders and sexualities—continue to inform and inspire our work at Sakhi and beyond. Acknowledging the closeness of our work has prompted us to create and reinforce boundaries and measures that prioritize our team’s health and happiness.

Looking ahead, Sakhi’s operating budget for the 2022 fiscal year is $3 million—which is more than double our budget in fiscal year 2019. Over the past three years, we have doubled our staff; opened a second office in Queens; and launched food justice, youth counseling, and housing programs that support survivors’ emotional and physical well-being. Survivors’ needs are central to every opportunity that we pursue—and, as we approach the new year, we are focused on ensuring our growth is and will remain sustainable. To that end, we continually reflect upon how we can better serve our constituents—as well as how they can become leaders within their own circles and carry this movement forward.

**Our 2021 Annual Report outlines the changes that we have implemented, together with our achievements, from this past year.** We are excited for you to explore this report and invite you to reach out to us anytime to connect and discuss our impact further.

From all of us at Sakhi, thank you for standing with survivors as we widen the pathways toward healing and justice—and best wishes for a safe, healthy, and happy New Year.

In Solidarity,

Vidya Satchit  
BOARD CHAIR

Kavita Mehra  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Gender-based violence is a global public health crisis.

Gender-based violence is defined as any harmful threat or act that is rooted in someone’s actual or perceived biological sex, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and/or lack of adherence to varying socially-constructed norms around masculinity and femininity. Rooted in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination, it is complex and systemic in nature.

At Sakhi, we recognize that gender-based violence happens in all communities regardless of class, ethnicity, race, or religion. However, research shows that, compared to the general population, South Asian communities are likely to both experience higher rates of gender-based violence and underreport those experiences.

During the pandemic, the UN reported that rates of domestic violence experienced by women and girls increased by 20% globally. Given the trends that we saw through our organization, we believe that the actual rates of increase are substantially higher, especially given that this data does not address rates of violence amongst people of all genders.
About Sakhi

OUR MISSION

Sakhi for South Asian Women exists to represent the South Asian diaspora in a survivor-led, survivor-centered movement for gender justice, and to honor the collective and inherent power of all survivors of violence.

OUR WORK

Founded in 1989, Sakhi builds power with survivors in New York City who have encountered interpersonal or community violence. We serve survivors of South Asian descent from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and the South Asian diaspora in Africa and the Caribbean.

Every survivor’s journey is unique. Through our 1:1 advocacy and case management, we seek to meet survivors where they are.

A SPACE OF HEALING

Sakhi is a sanctuary and a space of healing. We work with survivors, allies, and partners to advocate for systemic changes in policy and practice at the local, state, and federal levels. The outcomes of our journey include:

SAFETY
• freedom from violence and fear
• housing, food, and healthcare security
• economic independence

POWER
• agency for self-determination
• access to education

HEALING
• hope
• emotional well-being
• ownership of one’s present and future

LIBERATION
• access to happiness
• leadership in the advocacy space

We envision a world in which we are all equipped with the tools and network that can enable us to pursue safety, healing, and joy—on our own terms.
At Sakhi, our programs are grounded in survivors’ expressed needs. We take a trauma-informed approach to responding to violence, reducing poverty and ending the cycle of violence.

**Anti-Violence**

Sakhi provides culturally-responsive services in eight languages. Our Anti-Violence work is rooted in the imperative to meet survivors’ expressed needs and build safety in accordance with their goals. The Anti-Violence team’s interventions include: crisis and case management; safety planning and ongoing emotional support; translation assistance and advocacy in court and at healthcare visits; weekly support groups; counseling referrals; and shelter. Encompassed within our Anti-Violence work, Sakhi offers expert services to survivors of forced marriage, elder abuse, and sexual assault.

**Mental Health**

As trauma-informed service providers, we understand the importance of having mental health services available to the community. Mental health services are neither affordable nor accessible for most United States residents, and they are rarely culturally- or linguistically-specific. Since 2017, Sakhi has provided in-house mental health counseling. Currently, we have three full-time counselors on our team who work with survivors 1:1 and in groups.

**Economic Empowerment**

Sakhi’s Economic Empowerment Program is a pioneering model that exists to ensure survivors’ financial stability. We believe that self-determination and self-access—the ability to make decisions for one’s self and access a pathway to one’s own goals—are key to an individual’s long-term safety and security. To help survivors achieve economic independence, we provide case management, organize various skills workshops and career fairs, support resume building and credit repair, and offer educational scholarships. We also assist survivors with accessing public benefits and job opportunities, and in 2021, we started a support group, EE Connections, that seeks to create community around the shared experiences of finding economic safety.

For us, “trauma-informed” means centering trust, mindfulness, and equity in our interactions, culture, and decision-making processes.

**Food Justice**

Sakhi’s Food Justice Program was established in 2019 as the first such program for South Asians in Manhattan. This program was born out of our understanding of how destabilizing it is to be without basic necessities, particularly while experiencing trauma. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our program was available five days a week as a resource to those with limited access to food, hygiene, and infant products. As a result of the public health crisis, we expanded our program to a food delivery and subsidy program for survivors and their children.
Transitional Housing

In April of 2019, Sakhi expanded its housing services to provide tenant-based rental assistance. Our Housing Program supports survivors with full rent for two years in an apartment of their choice, in a location that is safe and accessible. Sakhi’s Housing team supports survivors with finding and moving into a new home, and helps to cover moving fees, security deposit payments, and utilities.

Community Engagement

Sakhi’s Community Engagement model includes workshops and trainings for community members and other service providers. We strive to increase awareness of our services as well as other available resources to those within the South Asian community in New York City. In addition to workshops, Sakhi’s calendar includes panels, fireside chats, and more. We seek to educate on topics such as cultivating healthy relationships, mental health, reproductive rights, Sakhi advocates’ perspectives on gender justice, our programming, and more.

Youth Empowerment

Sakhi developed our Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) in 2016, to support survivors under the age of twenty-four. Sakhi seeks to empower young people with the skills to break cycles of interpersonal and gender-based violence by providing: individual youth mental health counseling, mentorships, financial planning, and legal, medical, and housing referrals. We also facilitate peer support groups on topics such as financial literacy, community organizing, and leadership development. Our support groups provide a safe space for South Asian youth to freely discuss and explore issues around identity, family, relationships, positive sexuality, and gender. In 2021, YEP collaborated with the Queens Museum to develop a summer youth Community Mobilization Arts Practicum, which culminated in the Inherent Power exhibition at the Museum and featured the participants’ final works.
A 19 year-old survivor I started working with in the fall of 2020, she had to drop out of college, but she was able to move out of her abusive parents’ home. Now she has her own place. She has a job that pays a living wage. She remarked recently that she feels like she has finally started transitioning from surviving to living. Gaining that agency and a physical space of her own has opened up so much mental and emotional space for her to focus on the rest of her healing process. She was dealing with intense and recent trauma and abuse. But she’s moving to a place in our sessions now where she feels holistically safe enough to revisit and understand a childhood trauma that she has never really talked about with anyone—an experience that had a major impact on her development and outlook. She is able to peel back the layers of a past trauma to build a more solid foundation in her present life.

It is really incredible what folks can do, even with just a listening ear, some extra money, and validation. I am getting to witness some incredible journeys and I’m really thankful for the trust that that involves.

Azaadi Khan
Youth Mental Health Counselor and Advocate
This year, we received **over 1,500 calls** to our phone, text, and email helplines. Expanding our crisis response from last year, we **distributed $415,000** to survivors to support food, educational, rental, and other basic needs throughout 2021—nearly **three times** the amount of funding that we distributed throughout 2020.

**Safe and affordable housing is essential to well-being and growth**

45

*In a 25% increase from 2020, 45 survivors received $325,000 in housing assistance from Sakhi, 24 of whom are supported with **guaranteed, long-term rental assistance**, including moving and utility expenses.*

**Listening to youth is how we prevent the cycle of violence from continuing**

45

45 young folks participated in Sakhi’s Youth Empowerment Program through our **arts and social justice programming** and 24 youth survivors received counseling services.

**Healing necessitates emotional safety and sanctuary**

95

*We offered both **1:1 and group counseling to 95 survivors** through our trauma-informed Mental Health Program, which saw a 23% increase in its caseload from 2020.*

**Economic justice is labor justice is gender justice**

200

Sakhi’s Economic Empowerment Program saw a 46% increase in survivors served from 2020, providing **200 survivors with career training, public benefits support, ESL classes, and more.**

**Culturally- and linguistically-responsive resources should be widely accessible**

450

*We provided **450 survivors with individual crisis intervention and/or case management in eight South Asian languages**: Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Nepali, Punjabi, Sylheti, and Urdu.*

**Achieving food justice is essential to realizing basic rights**

$30,000

Sakhi’s Food Justice Program invested $30,000 in food assistance for **70 families through our two pantries, 640 grocery deliveries, and food cards.**

**We trust survivors to envision their own pathways to healing**

$60,000

*Sakhi distributed **$60,000 in emergency cash assistance to survivors.** These funds covered basic needs and **enabled pathways to safety.***
### March 9
Sakhi hosts panel on abortion rights
Sakhi hosts a conversation with Dr. Meera Shah, Navila Rashid, Pooja Raj, and Veda Kamra that is centered around Dr. Shah’s anthology, *You’re the Only One I’ve Told: The Stories Behind Abortion*.

### April 10
Our Sisters Safety Community Rally
Sakhi joins NAPAWF at “Our Sisters Safety Community Rally Against Racial and Misogynistic Violence” in Chinatown, advocating for awareness, respect, and resources for the AAPI community in the wake of the Atlanta parlor shootings.

### April 12
AAPI Anti-Violence Coalition Wins $10M
Sakhi, Chinese American Planning Council (CPC), Womankind, Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC), and the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CAFC) win $10 million for AAPI organizations in NY.

### May - June
Alisha Haridasani Gupta hosts Fireside Chats
NYT gender reporter Alisha Haridasani Gupta hosts fireside chats with activist, writer, and survivor Tanya Selvaratnam and musician Madame Gandhi, to raise awareness about GBV and Sakhi.

### October 12
Kamrun Nahar and Shyda Rashid on TBN24
Kamrun Nahar, a pharmacy technician and survivor, joins Shyda Rashid, Sakhi Anti-Violence Program Manager, on TBN24 to discuss domestic violence within the Bangladeshi community in New York.

### October 30
*Inherent Power* Opens at Queens Museum
"Inherent Power," which features the work of seven young artists, launches at the Queens Museum. The product of a partnership with the Museum, the exhibition is the culmination of Sakhi’s Community Mobilization Arts Practicum for South Asian youth aged 13-18—led by Azaadi Khan and Veda Kamra.

### April 10
Sakhi publishes *We Celebrate Us*
Sakhi honors survivors who serve as role models in our community through the community journal, "We Celebrate Us," organized by Anti-Violence Program Manager, Shilpy Chatterjee.

### September 11
Sakhi commemorates Swarna Chalasani
Sakhi commemorates the life and legacy of former Sakhi, Swarna Chalasani, whom we lost to 9/11. The Swarna Chalasani Economic Empowerment Fund underwrites survivors’ educational pursuits.

### October 27
Sakhi Organizes a Survivor-centered DVAM
Sakhi hosts an arts workshop, three new support groups—one with Queens Legal Services, one with elderly survivors, and another with Nepali survivors—a storytelling series, *In My Voice*, and an IG Live panel with our EE advocates on economic justice.

### November 15
ENDGBV Awards Sweta Saji and Pria Sibal “Advocate of the Year”
Housing Program Manager, Pria Sibal, and Economic Empowerment Program Manager, Sweta Saji, are awarded “Advocate of the Year” by the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence.
Responding to Crisis with Care

The pandemic offers us many learning lessons, including the importance of malleability.

At Sakhi, we work to ensure that our community has access to the material and emotional resources and support that are needed to both prevent and respond to violence. In 2021, this commitment manifested in numerous ways, including but not limited to:

- Our trauma-informed solidarity grants;
- Flexible and responsive training and programmatic efforts, as evidenced in the measures we have taken to restructure Sakhi’s Food Justice Program and develop our ESL, digital skills, and financial literacy classes;
- The inclusion of significant rental assistance funding within our Housing Program, which helps survivors leave behind abusive situations without the existential fear of losing shelter or other forms of stability;
- A new, robust youth mental health counseling program that amplifies the impact of our existing Youth Program via individual and group sessions;
- An expanded helpline, which is now a volunteer program led by a new dedicated team member; and
- $10 million in state funding for AAPI organizations in New York that are working to prevent violence, and another $3 million in state funding for the disaggregation of AAPI data, which Sakhi secured following months of advocacy in collaboration with five other local organizations.

These, as well as many more service changes oriented toward survivors’ needs at all stages of healing, are key components of our long-term strategy for moving beyond crisis recovery and toward sustained well-being.
CARING FOR OUR CAREGIVERS

We are deeply grateful to our team for working tirelessly to ensure that survivors receive the care and resources that they deserve while fostering an environment of support and collaboration. This has been an extraordinarily challenging two years; team members consistently share that they have never experienced a crisis of such magnitude. The burnout and vicarious trauma associated with Sakhi’s work have become more difficult to bear since last March, with the global public health crisis eroding the physical boundaries between our work and personal lives.

In pursuit of stability and joy amongst our team, in 2021, we:

• Cultivated a more flexible workplace and shifted to an unlimited PTO policy;
• Improved our employee benefits to better support long-term physical and financial health;
• Grew our team to mitigate burnout and compassion fatigue while enhancing collaboration; and
• Extended a professional development and training budget to each team member.

It is fulfilling to be on the other side and see where a person started and is now going. I think particularly for me, coming into this field of mental health, which is not taken seriously in my culture and South Asian culture as a whole—it is particularly fulfilling...It gives hope. As the outside person looking in, I’m seeing change happen in real time—on interpersonal and community levels; mental health is becoming so much more important in the culture, regardless of one’s age. All of my clients have this common denominator of “I want to help myself, be better, and understand myself better.”

Rachana Parekh
Mental Health Counselor
In the communities that I am in, I am recognizing an increased awareness around solidarity, I think because COVID has prompted greater desire for comradery. I feel like that has affected my work directly by broadening my sense of my work. And in terms of connecting with and beyond the South Asian diaspora, I’m more able to see patterns and - there’s a larger world with which we can connect and build. Usually I’m very in the weeds with my work, but COVID has helped me to put it all together.

Ananya Bhasin
Anti-Violence Program Manager

The clients we are working with are on a similar journey as we are. And I think that’s something that has been integral during 2021. How do you continue to better yourself during the pandemic, given the loss of relationships—or, with these relationships taking center stage.

We’re working on boundaries. And maybe they’re also working on modeling those lessons in their own relationships. And maybe that has a ripple effect.

Pooja Raj
Associate Director, Counseling & Youth Services

Meeting and working with clients, it’s a daily reminder of why we do this. And there is such a strong sense of purpose here at Sakhi. Across my team, we have the same sense of purpose in life. Sakhi gives us this platform in focusing on this issue that we all are so passionate about. I really appreciate our organization for letting me formulate a plan, work through it with team members, and implement this vision with the support of my team—so that I can support clients and the community.

Shubhekchya Malla
Anti-Violence Program Advocate
We Are Building Power with Survivors

In 2021, we organized with Nepali survivors in Queens to spread awareness of gender-based violence and the resources available to address it in New York. We also managed our first transnational case, in which our AVP Advocates located and safely returned the abducted children of a survivor.

“A support group member reflected: “Today I am happy. I am not happy because I am rich or young, but because I am able to have people around me that I call sisters [other group members]. For 17 years I wondered if all I experienced was my fault. Connecting with you all showed me how wrong I was.”

We Are Renewing Our Sense of Sanctuary

A record number of survivors received counseling services from Sakhi, precipitating the creation of a waitlist. Across our programs, we sought to create more opportunities for survivors to foster connection with one another. We created an elder survivor support group, a legal support group, EE Connections, and the Jamghat, for Nepali survivors.

With Sakhi’s case planning and referrals, I’ve moved to a safe shelter and my attorney has filed a request in family court to require my husband to return my children back to the U.S. from Pakistan...I’ve recently even started learning more about New York City and even commuted around for the first time!
We Are Healing Through Creative Expression

We developed a summer program for South Asian youth aged 13-18: the Community Mobilization Arts Practicum. The Practicum, developed in tandem with the Queens Museum’s Year of Uncertainty program, culminated in a final exhibition of the seven young artists-participants’ politically-charged works.

"My piece ... shows Mount Rushmore. I encourage people to look at my art piece, think about my art piece, and act literally on my art piece, by writing their thoughts on sticky labels, and then sticking it on a frame ... that will eventually hide the painting completely from view ... showing a dissolving of this nationalistic sense that the federal government has that’s white nationalist, male-centered, male-dominant.

We are Investing in a Violence-Free NYC

I deserve to move to a safe place and live a free and happy life. I did not want police involvement but needed guidance on what to do with my physical safety and mental well being. My college counselor called Sakhi’s helpline for support, and they’ve since connected me with a shelter, helped me cover moving expenses, and identified additional NYC resources for me to access.

"I deserve to move to a safe place and live a free and happy life. I did not want police involvement but needed guidance on what to do with my physical safety and mental well being. My college counselor called Sakhi’s helpline for support, and they’ve since connected me with a shelter, helped me cover moving expenses, and identified additional NYC resources for me to access.

Housing Program Manager, Pria Sibal, expanded the depth of our Housing Program, which supports survivors with full rent for up to two years in an apartment of their choice in a location that is safe and accessible. In just seven months, we enrolled fifty survivors in housing."
Founders
Anannya Bhattacharjee
Mallika Dutt
Tula Goenka
Geetanjali Misra
Romita Shetty

Board of Directors
Vidya Satchit, Board Chair
Deepti Jain, Treasurer
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Margaret Abraham
Meeta Anand
Manisha Mehrotra
Deepti Mittal
Nandini Nathani
Chandni Prasad
Santushi Kuruppu
Subadra Panchanadeswaran

Our Team
Ananya Bhasin, Economic Empowerment Advocate
Shana Bhattacharya, Director of Development
Shilpy Chatterjee, Anti-Violence Program Manager
Anusha Goossens, Anti-Violence Program Manager
Veda Kamra, Communications Manager
Aroob Khan, Economic Empowerment Program Advocate
Azaadi Khan, Youth Program Advocate & Mental Health Counselor
Malini Khorana, Director of Finance & Operations
Priya Krishna, Development and Operations Associate
Rezowana Linta, Counselor
Rashmi Luthra, Director of Programs, Queens & Brooklyn
Shubhekchya Malla, Anti-Violence Program Advocate
Kavita Mehra, Executive Director
Fhamida Mohasin, Anti-Violence Program Advocate
Rachana Parekh, Counselor
Pooja Raj, Associate Director, Counseling & Youth
Hana Ramdhany, Finance and Operations Associate
Shyda Rashid, Manager, Anti-Violence Program
Kusum Ravindranath, Associate Director, Economic Empowerment Program & Housing
Sweta Saji, Economic Empowerment Program Manager
Reshmi Sengupta, Community Outreach Specialist
Namrata Sharma, Economic Empowerment Program Advocate
Pria Sibal, Housing Development Manager
Manisha Shah, Helpline & Volunteer Manager
Mayuri Vedi, Special Projects Associate
Varsha Vijayakumar, Digital Communications Associate
Jason Yoon, Grants Manager

Young Professionals Network
Sonia Mittal
Ayman Mohammad
Armaan Nathani
Zachary Patel
Neha Sodhi
Sneha Subramanian
Susan Varghese
Defying Limits in 2022

In 2021, Sakhi shifted from a reactive response, to a proactive one. Our priority was to ground ourselves in the realities of survivors who continue to be on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis so that we could effectively respond to the emergent needs of our community. We focused on growing our unique, culturally-responsive team, and in turn, our capacity to address the intersecting oppressions that South Asian immigrant survivors face.

In 2022, we look forward to:

1. **Enhancing Survivor-led Programming & Organizing to Prevent Violence**
   
   Sakhi’s programs will continue to be survivor-centered, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed. We will strive to ensure that we not only bring survivors closer to Sakhi, but also that we bring Sakhi closer to survivors. Each program department will further invest in events, educational workshops, political engagement, and networks that are organized by and for survivors in our community and beyond.

2. **Imagining New Pathways for Healing**
   
   Sakhi is committed to investing in the healing of survivors of all sexual and gender identities, and will further this work through training and partnerships that can inform and improve our advocacy. Sakhi will deepen our partnerships with key community entities such as schools, South-Asian owned small businesses, and community-based organizations, in hopes of cultivating networks for support and healing that exist outside of carceral institutions.

3. **Advocate For and With All Survivors On Local and National Levels**
   
   Sakhi will expand on our work with The Collective, a New York coalition that represents survivors from NYC’s Black, Latinx, Asian, South Asian, Arab, and immigrant communities. In 2022, the Collective will advocate for a survivor-centered agenda at the city and state levels. Sakhi will also deepen our work as a founding member of SOAR, a national network of gender justice organizations that connects local South Asian communities across the U.S. to survivors, resources, and one another.
## Thank You to Our 2021 Supporters!

We are immensely grateful to our community of supporters for investing in survivors and helping us carry our mission to fruition. Your unwavering support makes our impact possible—thank you for believing in survivor power as a force for transformative change.

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<td>Rushd &amp; Jeremy Silverman, Sundar Kodiyalam, Tamseela Tayyabkhan &amp; Sanjeev</td>
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<td>Foundation, The Patrina Foundation, The Queens Museum of Art</td>
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Growing Our Capacity to Serve Survivors

A 47% increase in expenses between FY 2020 and FY 2021 attests to the expansion of our services to survivors of gender-based violence. A 49% increase in income attests to the robust support Sakhi has received from the community.

FY 2021 Assets

Grants/contributions receivable, net.................................................................$1,027,971
Property and equipment, net.............................................................................$2,092
Prepaid expenses............................................................................................$18,788
Other assets......................................................................................................$68,390
Cash and cash equivalents...............................................................................$801,855

FY 2021 Liabilities & Net Assets

Accounts payable & accrued expenses..........................................................$46,137
Deferred rent liability.......................................................................................$24,490
Net Assets........................................................................................................$1,848,469
We thank you for continuing to support us as we defy the limits that confine our vision of gender justice.

If you or a loved one is looking for resources to leave or recover from abusive circumstances, please reach out to us.

HOW TO SUPPORT SAKHI

You can make a donation to support Sakhi’s survivor-centered work online at sakhi.org or by mail at P.O. Box 1333 Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008-1333.

For questions or information regarding donations or other inquiries, please contact our Director of Development, Shana Bhattacharya, at shana.bhattacharya@sakhi.org.

For any general inquiries, reach out to us at contactus@sakhi.org.