COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

UMEED-HOPE INC.

By Komal Kaur, President of Umeed-Hope Inc.

TOPICS Mental Health, Family Violence

ABOUT

Umeed-Hope Inc. (Umeed) is an organization based in Indianapolis, Indiana, serving family violence survivors. The Umeed team of mental health professionals and attorneys supports families in emergencies, advocates for the needs of family violence survivors, and educates the public on the tools needed to identify triggers and signs of family violence. In collaboration with local community organizations and public schools, Umeed aims to break the cycle of violence through effective and culturally appropriate tools for healing and individual empowerment.

DATA NEEDS

Umeed-Hope is focused on understanding family violence and its risk factors in South Asian communities. To date, the organization has relied on data from the Census Bureau to discern relationships between demographic characteristics, such as ethnic and cultural background, socioeconomic status and language proficiency, and family violence. Demographic data is important but not enough – Umeed-Hope also needs data that captures the intersectionality of issues such as immigration status, cultural practices, mental health and family violence. It is seeking more comprehensive and culturally specific data that reflects the nuanced experiences of South Asian immigrant and refugee communities. **This data is crucial for understanding the makeup of the communities Umeed-Hope serves so it can tailor services accordingly.**

Umeed-Hope lacks but needs ethnicity-specific data on the prevalence of family violence, the pervasiveness of mental health conditions, and the accessibility of culturally competent services for South Asian immigrant and refugee populations. Development of culturally and linguistically aligned interventions to prevent and/or mitigate such deterring influences of family members remains impossible, however, without disaggregated data. **More detailed data is crucial to assist the needs of the South Asian community, which includes Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Punjabis, Gujaratis, Tamils, Bengalis, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Nepalis, Bangladeshis, Adivasis, and Dalits.** Each of these groups have distinct cultural customs and norms for which programs must take account to be successful.

The lack of data hinders Umeed-Hope's efforts to serve community members and advocate for their needs – data is the first step to ensuring the resources and attention needed to meet community needs. Increased collaboration between public agencies and local organizations like Umeed-Hope could help bridge these data gaps and lead to more effective, culturally aligned

Komal Kaur, President of Umeed-Hope, with elementary students at Gurmat Camp—a week-long camp at Sikh Satsang of Indianapolis that emphasizes Sikhi, Punjabi culture, and includes sessions on mental health.

interventions. Umeed-Hope's priorities for essential data disaggregated by ethnicity include:

- **Health, mental health and well-being.** Agencies in these functional areas could improve by collecting and disseminating more specific, disaggregated data on immigrant and refugee populations, including details on their experiences with domestic violence, mental health, and access to services.
    - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies that should publish disaggregated data include the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Refugee Resettlement (AFC/ORR), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC oversees key datasets such as the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

Presentation by Komal Kaur for elementary students at Gurmat Camp at Sikh Satsang of Indianapolis. The session covers what bullying is, how often it happens, and whom students can turn to for support.

- **Criminal justice.** The Department of Justice (DOJ) oversees the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), which needs to enhance its data collection on domestic violence incidents within specific ethnic communities.
- **Demographics at a local level.** A significant gap in data is evident regarding the intersection of immigration status, language proficiency, and access to social services at a more localized level, such as city or neighborhood data. If ethnicity-specific data at the local level could be added to **the U.S. Census Bureau's American Communities Survey (ACS), that information would be invaluable.**

The lack of ethnicity-specific data has implications beyond Umeed-Hope. It also limits foundational academic research and knowledge-building that form the evidence base for effective interventions. For instance, Umeed-Hope and other agencies would welcome invaluable evidence elucidating how cultural stigmas within South Asian communities can discourage people from reporting domestic violence or mental health struggles. Similarly, information on the effectiveness of existing federal- and state-level interventions for these populations, including barriers to accessing services, would greatly enhance the ability of Umeed-Hope to develop targeted support programs.

To better serve survivors of family violence, Umeed-Hope needs HHS, DOJ, and the Census Bureau to integrate ethnicity-specific data in all reports. This data is critical to informing Umeed about how best to serve the community, to improving understanding of the drivers of family violence in the community, and to enhancing the ability of the organization to advocate for necessary resources.

Front cover top photo: *Umeed-Hope board members alongside community allies at Healing Collectively, a coalition-building event hosted by Umeed aimed at raising awareness about gun violence and honoring the victims of the FedEx mass shooting.*

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