

Overview

DRUM - Desis Rising Up and Moving is a multigenerational, membership led organization of low-wage South Asian and Indo-Caribbean immigrants, workers and youth in New York City that was founded in 2000.

Mission

“DRUM was founded to build the power of South Asian and Indo-Caribbean low wage immigrant workers, youth, and families in New York City to win economic and educational justice, and civil and immigrant rights.” – DRUM website



Constituency

- Asian & Pacific Islanders
- Ages 13-65+
- LGBTQ
- Immigrants & Undocumented
- Formerly Incarcerated

Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in New York

Difficulty Navigating the Healthcare System

Access to Quality Education

Excessive Policing

Neighborhood & School Safety

Community & Cultural Connectivity

Including physical, social, emotional, and cultural health; connection to communities, language, a sense of self, pride and dignity in themselves.

General Issues of Safety Living In an Anti-immigrant, Anti-Muslim Environment

Poor Living Conditions

Which exacerbate children’s health conditions.

“A lot of our members are people living in basements or multiple families in a single apartment, and so physical space, overcrowdedness, sub-standard housing also impacts the young children particularly, and so that exacerbates health conditions or other existing health problems.”

Limited Community Spaces

“There are limited avenues for children to be able to engage with other children, particularly if both parents are working. But, you know, oftentimes children are cooped up inside of homes and have limited access like common community spaces or places where they’re able to build with other young kids, and so that does have an impact on the social health as well.”

Lack of Access to Childcare

46.5 % of Asian parents of children 0-5 in New York rely on no one other than family for childcare.¹

“Where do you find people to leave children for care? Some families do have the ability [and] extended family here, and they’ll leave children with family. But a lot of it ends up being just sort of community members trying to figure out alternative ways in terms of like ‘oh, in our apartment building there’s this older lady’ and so several of the families will leave their kids there, with neighbors or common family friends.”

“... in New York state, regardless of the immigration status, young children are able to access healthcare. But it’s not the best quality or the easiest to navigate, particularly for immigrant families...being able to navigate those systems is so complex often times that, just even for children, they end up reverting to only accessing emergency care.”

– Fahd Ahmed, Executive Director

Allies Working on Children’s Health

- Sikh Coalition – New York, NY <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/>
- Council on American-Islamic Relations – Washington D.C. <https://www.cair.com/>
- South Asian Americans Leading Together – Takoma Park, MD <http://saalt.org/>
- Dignity in Schools Campaign – New York, NY <http://www.dignityinschools.org/>

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in New York

12.8%

of Non-Hispanic Asian & Pacific Islander (API) parents in New York City reported their children's health as "fair/poor," close to twice as high as the next race demographic.¹



in 2009, 2.6% of API children were uninsured in New York City. Additionally, 6.8% of API children were uninsured at some point during the year.¹

62.7%

of API parents in New York City reported feeling that their child was "always" safe in their neighborhood, followed by 27.5% "usually," and 5.9% "sometimes".¹

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

- **Educational Justice** and improving funding equity to make sure schools are properly funded and supported.
- **Working to end the School-to-Prison Pipeline** for children who get racialized and criminalized inside of schools, particularly children who are Muslim or are perceived to be Muslim.
- **Issues around Police Accountability**, particularly how police treat communities, how they respond to situations, gauging their day-to-day engagements, and issues in regards to neighborhood surveillance.
- **Immigration Policy Work** for people to access proper documentation needed to seek employment and receive fair wages.
- **Leadership Development Programs** for young people to meet other youth, discuss problems, form think-tanks, strategize, and organize (including summer internship).
- **Referral System** that is provided by community partners to aid children and families dealing with issues of abuse or healthcare.



Community Defined "Best Practices" to Improve Childhood Health

- **Providing a community space:** "[it] is important for people to have a place of community, a sense of community, and be able to build with each other and relate with each other. The sense of community is also creating a space for people to be able to share, emote, think about their experiences, about their struggles, and then...collectively talk about those things. We found that to be very, very important, both for our work, and for the wellbeing of people we are working with."
- **Working around school discipline systems:** "a lot of our youth [experience] issues of being bullied in school [which] is a pretty big issue, for being Muslim, for being brown, for being South Asian, and then, you know, obviously that has a lot of negative consequences...we're looking at larger systemic causes within the educational justice system and within school communities. How do we utilize restorative justice as a solution for bullying for other issues that happen inside of schools."

DRUM Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

Creating a space for community building

"[Our] biggest success story is based on reflections from our members on really having the community space, even more so than the campaigns, you know, sort of a place where people come build community with each other, build relationships with each other; because isolation's a pretty strong issue within our communities, particularly for women and particularly for youth."



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1. City of New York. (2009). Child Community Health Survey 2009. Retrieved April, 2017, from <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/epiquery/Child/CCHSIndex.html>