

Winnipeg's Punjabi Ministry – InterAct Canada

Project Evaluation - August 2018

Overview

InterAct began a ministry to Punjabis in Winnipeg in 2014. When Akmal Erastus and Sarah Akmal and their family arrived in Winnipeg they thought the Lord was leading them to a ministry to Punjabi speaking Muslims. Instead, they quickly realized the vast majority of Punjabi speakers were followers of Sikhism not Islam so they began to shift their ministry focus. By God's grace they connected with a multi-cultural church that is also very mission minded. At the advice of their Canadian pastor they sought out and joined InterAct.

Akmal is an evangelist and he very quickly began developing strategies to connect and share the Gospel with both Punjabi Sikhs as well as Muslims around the city. Akmal is also an excellent networker so he began connecting with evangelical churches in the neighbourhoods where immigrant people lived. Many times he was disheartened at some of the evangelical churches apparent lack of concern for sharing the Gospel with their Sikh and Muslim neighbours. During his first year of ministry it became obvious to Akmal that spreading his efforts too wide was not going to be effective so refined his focus and began reaching out to Winnipeg's 20,000 Punjabi Sikhs.

In the last three years various outreach events and programs have been held. These events included English as an Additional Language (EAL – also known as ESL), Christmas and Easter outreaches with a Biblical explanation of these Canadian holidays, literature distribution, visiting gurdwaras, serving people through assistance in job searches and immigration paperwork. A few Caucasian believers have gotten a vision for helping with these outreaches and InterAct has been able to recruit TESOL students who interned in Winnipeg teaching English and learning to love Sikh people in the process.

Last fall (2017) a team from the Calgary Punjabi Church (planted by InterAct missionaries) traveled to Winnipeg to come alongside Akmal and kick start a church plant. Over a dozen East Indian people living in Winnipeg committed to participating in weekly services during that weekend of worship and teaching. In late September the Winnipeg Punjabi Church starting meeting and people began getting saved on a weekly basis. 16 decisions to follow Christ were recorded in the first four months of the church's existence. In April the first communion service was held on Good Friday and in June the four people were baptized.

As Akmal disciples these new believers, others are confessing their new faith in Christ. Akmal recognizes that he needs others who can come alongside him in discipling and teaching these new believers. Pressure to return to the belief system of the extended family – even from India and other parts of the world – is very strong. Potential team-mates from Pakistan need speedy immigration approvals and potential InterAct recruits from North America need to hear the Lord's call to this ministry. We need to uphold this latest InterAct church plant in prayer.

The chart below outlines summary of the ministry in Winnipeg. The outputs and outcomes columns report on what has been accomplished while the impacts are forward looking to project where this ministry is heading in the next 3-5 years.

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	FUTURE IMPACTS
Statement of the overall purpose of the project	Specific statements of what the project sets out to accomplish	Specific tasks to complete through implementation of the project	Immediate results (direct products of project activities for the past year)	Intermediate results (direct products of project over past 1-3 years)	Long-term results (desired results in next 3-5 years)
<p>Vision: We are responsible to be faithful to continue to work out of our salvation. Trusting Christ that he will build his church and being available to help the people he will bring in his kingdom.</p>	<p>PRE-EVANGELISM Preparing for ministry (Ongoing equipping) Akmal Erastus was the Pakistan field director for Operation Mobilization before coming to Canada so he had specific ministry models he hoped to utilize.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam and Judy Paras were mentors for Akmal and Sarah for the first two years of ministry in Canada. • Jamie Dowdy (Southern Baptist missionary) spent several weeks with Akmal over a period of about three years. He taught Akmal about Sikhism and evangelism/discipleship among Sikhs. • C2C churchplanting network is giving financial support, monthly fellowship opportunities, and annual church planting conference for encouragement and equipping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akmal and Sarah were encouraged. • Akmal better understood Sikhism and how to reach Sikhs. • Akmal had a Sikhism handbook other reference material to refer to and consult as reached out to Sikhs. • More connections with local church planters for encouragement and fellowship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akmal seeing some different styles of outreach/ministry in Canada. • Akmal has a relationship with someone who understands Sikhism and can answer his questions. • Not known at this time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam and Judy continuing to encourage and coach as Punjabi church in Winnipeg develops. • Jamie continues to be a resource for Akmal as the Punjabi church develops and leaders are trained. • Continued support and encouragement. • Possible partnership in other church plants.

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	<p>Establishing Relationships</p> <p>A significant part of the missionary's ministry energy is spent on relational ministry. This includes serving people and bringing Jesus and His Gospel message into those relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building relationships with Punjabis through visiting in their homes, visiting local gudwaras, offering EAL (English as an Additional Language) classes, assisting in job search, and other helps with immigration and local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punjabi people have been befriended, served, and 'given a cup of water' in the name of the Lord. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akmal has relationship with several family groups of both Sikh and Hindu background. • Akmal has growing network of Punjabi, Urdu, and Hindi speaking believers who are interested in seeing Punjabis reached and a church developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These relational networks will continue to expand to other Punjabis who are searching.

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<p>Vision: We are responsible to be faithful to continue to work out of our salvation. Trusting Christ that he will build his church and being available to help the people he will bring in his kingdom.</p>	<p>EVANGELISM Presenting the Gospel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer walks around Sikh temples and neighbourhoods. • Literature and video distribution door-to-door and in public places. • EAL classes (English as an Additional Language) using Biblical stories. • Christmas and Easter outreach meals. An explanation of the 'Canadian' holiday with the Biblical meaning. • Outreach event with Punjabi believers from Calgary Punjabi church taking the lead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific prayers offered for Punjabi people and against the false belief system of Sikhism. • Punjabi people in Winnipeg are being given opportunity to hear the Gospel. • About 20 Punjabi people attended classes and experienced God's love through Christian teachers and learned more about the Bible. • Two of those are now regularly attending the Punjabi church. • 125 Indian people heard a Biblical explanation for a previously unknown holiday celebration - Christmas. • About 45 people attended an outreach/ worship event. 15 said they were very interested in attending weekly Punjabi services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caucasian believers and churches made aware of Sikh people and encouraging prayer for their spiritual need. • 800 Jesus DVD's and over 2000 Scripture calendars given out. • Over a 120 Punjabi people attended classes, experienced God's love through Christian teachers and built relationship with believers. • Over 150 Indian people heard the Biblical story for unexplained holidays – Christmas & Easter • n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God continues to draw Sikhs to Himself through the prayers of His people. • May these continue to cause search for Truth. • People resources are needed to keep doing this outreach but ESL continues to be a vehicle for loving the Sikh community. • The church is developing a vision for continuing these outreaches.

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