

**South Hill's Inside Stories:  
Using Existing Digital Stories as a Community Building Tool**

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Jessica Moerman

Master of Arts in Community Development Candidate

University of Victoria

Prepared for the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

Academic Supervisor: Dr. Lynne Siemens

November 2013

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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I would like to thank all those who participated in the interviews and focus groups for this project. Not only did you contribute significantly to this report, but you also contributed to the work of South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH). Similarly, I also appreciate all of the staff members at SVNH and South Hill Neighbours Society who supported this project by helping to recruit participants for the focus groups. And of course, I thank Karen Larcombe for working through the initial idea for this project with me, guiding me as I completed the project, and supporting me while I completed this two and a half year program.

I also extend my appreciation to the School of Public Administration for creating a Master's program that made me want to go back to school. I thoroughly enjoyed the content of the program and the opportunity to delve into a project that was so relevant to my work in the nonprofit sector. I would also like to thank Lynne Siemens, my supervisor, for all of her guidance and feedback throughout the project process.

I appreciate my family, friends, and classmates for their support and good conversation about community development and my project. I thank my parents for instilling a lifelong love of learning in me. Finally, I thank my husband, Giles, for his patience and housework while I was preoccupied with coursework, research and writing.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report's client, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH), is a non-profit social service agency that focuses on building better neighbourhoods by providing a range of services to all ages. One way in which SVNH does this is by working with newcomers to Canada and finding ways to create more welcoming communities for them, which is the focus of this project. SVNH also works with the South Hill Neighbours Society (SHNS), a grassroots group of neighbours that works to address issues and create a more vibrant and active community. Together, SVNH and SHNS received funding from the Province of British Columbia's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program to create a public education tool about welcoming communities. SVNH and SHNS worked with Vancouver documentary filmmaker, Nettie Wild, to create an interactive website called Inside Stories. Inside Stories showcases nine interviews in which residents talk about the successes and challenges they have faced in coming to a new country or new community.

This project set out to assess the effectiveness of Inside Stories in meeting its original goals of being a public education tool around welcoming communities. Specifically, this project aimed to answer the following questions:

- What impact does Inside Stories have on viewers?
- How do facilitated activities in groups impact Inside Stories viewers?
- How can Inside Stories continue to be used as a community development tool?

To answer these questions, a facilitator's guide to be used with Inside Stories was created and interviews were conducted with potential facilitators to receive feedback and make adjustments. Once adjustments had been made to the facilitator's guide, two focus groups were then held with volunteers from SVNH's programs. The first focus group showed some of the stories from the website, while the second focus group showed the same stories but also included some facilitated activities from the facilitator's guide.

To provide greater context for the project, background information is provided on a number of relevant topics including the histories of SVNH, SHNS, and Inside Stories. Furthermore, the culturally diverse demographics of South Hill and immigration trends in BC in general explain the need for a project such as Inside Stories. The history of neighbourhood houses as part of a broader movement called the Settlement Movement explain SVNH's focus on bringing together people of different cultures. Finally, the history of funding immigrant services explains the current changes in the system and the need for a way to ensure the sustainability of Inside Stories without future funding.

For even greater context, the literature review examines two main areas: immigrant integration and storytelling. The first part discusses some of the approaches to integration and identifies the approaches taken in Canada. The importance of feeling a sense of belonging is also discussed, and the development of social ties and social capital are identified as ways to build a sense of belonging. Neighbourhood houses are identified as social anchors that act as places located in the community that help to generate social capital. In the second part, storytelling is identified as a common community

development technique. Digital storytelling combines new computer technology with traditional methods of storytelling in which the process is seen as equally important as the product. While evaluation of digital storytelling processes has been documented, much less is written about evaluations of the final product. This project focuses largely on the product of Inside Stories and how it can be used, rather than the process of creating Inside Stories.

Overall, Inside Stories had positive responses and clearly made an impact on those who viewed the stories. The responses to the focus group questions between the first and second groups were relatively similar. When asked about the purpose of Inside Stories, responses that related to belonging and community were the top responses in both groups. It is evident that Inside Stories has an impact on viewers whether they watch it on their own or whether they watch it in a facilitated group session. Inside Stories aims to encourage viewers to take action in their own neighbourhood to make it a more welcoming place, and many of the questions related to this goal. The second focus group was more likely to take actions that related to their neighbours such as trusting a neighbour or inviting a neighbour over. The first group was more likely to take lower-risk actions such as volunteering or attending a local community centre. These results show that although Inside Stories has an impact whether viewing the stories individually or in a facilitated group activity, its impact can be more focused on building relationships between neighbours by using facilitated activities.

Based on these results and the literature review, the following recommendations are provided:

**Short-term**

- Share the facilitation resources with SVNH staff and SHNS volunteers to encourage Inside Stories' use in programs
- Use Inside Stories within existing SVNH or SHNS community events as a potential discussion point
- Maintain a web presence by sharing some of the Inside Stories regularly or asking other sites to link to Inside Stories

**Intermediate-term**

- Recruit a social media intern to help generate interest and to help generate more stories on the park section of Inside Stories

**Long-term**

- Build the practice of storytelling into everyday programs and services at SVNH
- Develop a storytelling network among the neighbourhood houses to encourage sharing of resources and ideas

It is hoped that SVNH and SHNS will be able to use the information provided to continue using Inside Stories and to expand its use within SVNH programs and beyond. The attached facilitator's guide and recommendations will help to support them in this work.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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Around the globe, migration is increasing regularly. In much of the developed world, countries have declining population and thus are seeing increased immigration in order to make up for labour shortages (United Nations Population Fund, n.d.). With more immigration, countries like Canada are seeing increased diversity requiring people to learn to negotiate new national identities. A related global trend is the move from rural to urban cities increasing the challenges faced by cities (United Nations Population Fund). Alongside all of these changes are advances in technology, which have the potential to either connect people even more in this globalized world or to isolate individuals in their homes which discourages them from connecting with their local communities.

Vancouver provides a good example of these current shifts in world demographics and trends. The city continues to see large numbers of immigrants (Metro Vancouver, n.d.). With different cultures converging together in one city, it is necessary for people to develop an understanding of other cultures. Unfortunately, a report by the Vancouver Foundation (2012) showed a lack of trust between different cultures living in Vancouver. Their report also showed that despite an increase in social networking sites—websites that are designed to bring people together—Vancouverites are feeling more isolated rather than connected. These two issues, intercultural understanding and trust, and social connection are the core ideas behind this project.

How can community-based organizations work with technology, such as social networking sites, digital media, websites, and more, to address problems such as increased isolation and lack of trust between people of different backgrounds? South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and South Hill Neighbours Society delve into this question with Inside Stories, a digital media storytelling website meant to address isolation and intercultural understanding. The project combines technology with traditional storytelling methods. This project assesses how Inside Stories can be used as a community building tool and provides recommendations for its future use.

### 1.1 Objectives & Research Question

This study's purpose is to explore how a digital storytelling product, in this case the Inside Stories website and a draft facilitator's guide, could help to foster trust, acceptance, and the development of social connections between people of different cultural backgrounds in South Vancouver. The research questions that guided this project include the following:

- What impact does Inside Stories have on viewers?
- How do facilitated activities in groups impact Inside Stories viewers?
- How can Inside Stories continue to be used as a community development tool?

For the purposes of this study and the development of the facilitator's guide, I focused on adults rather than children or youth. While the guide could be used by those who work

with children and youth, it would need to be adjusted to be age-appropriate. However, this was out of the scope of this project.

## **1.2 Project's Rationale**

*“We have continued to see how deeply emotional it is for people to share their stories. Sharing stories leads to a sense of connection” (Jan 2011 interim report)*

*“A number of times a storyteller would relate an experience that he or she had been through, and would be surprised that the interviewer had a very similar experience although the interviewer was born in Canada. There is potential to follow up on this kind of dialogue that helps immigrants and non-immigrants listen to each other and discover both differences and shared experiences” (Jan 2011 interim report)*

The primary client, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH), is a nonprofit social service agency located in Vancouver, British Columbia. They were the lead organization in the Inside Stories project, and suggested that a study on its effectiveness and future use would be beneficial. To create Inside Stories, SVNH worked with a small grassroots society called South Hill Neighbours Society (SHNS) located in a small neighbourhood of South Vancouver. Because of the close nature of their partnership, it made sense to name them as a secondary client of this project.

SVNH and SHNS developed Inside Stories in response to a request for proposals to create a public education tool from the provincial government's Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP). WICWP funded projects that worked towards the ultimate outcome of creating a welcoming and inclusive community for newcomers to Canada. The issues identified above, isolation and lack of trust between different cultures, are two areas that welcoming and inclusive communities attempt to resolve. South Hill was identified as an ideal community in which to lead a project on welcoming communities because of its cultural diversity and because of the community leadership that could be provided by SHNS. It was also the centennial anniversary of the South Hill community, and it was thought that a video highlighting the contributions of immigrants would be an important legacy piece to leave behind (SVNH, 2009). Further details on the history and development of Inside Stories are outlined in the Background section.

Inside Stories is an interactive website that looks like a street in the neighbourhood (South Hill Inside Stories, n.d.). Viewers can click on houses or business and hear stories of integration told by the people who live or work inside these buildings, the majority of whom are immigrants and one of whom is First Nations (see Fig. 1). Upon completion of the Inside Stories website, a public event was held to launch the website. According to the funding, it was a public education tool and thus outreach was an essential component. The funding only covered the development of the website and the launch. It was over three years ago that Inside Stories was launched, but the issues of isolation and trust between cultures remains relevant. Public education tools are often created with a grant and then sit unused on the web or on a bookshelf. Now, the challenge is to find a way for the stories to continue to be used. This is particularly timely because the WICWP

program will soon cease to exist due to changes in the way services for newcomers are funded in British Columbia.



*Figure 1: Screen shot of the Inside Stories home page. The viewer moves along the street and sees more houses as the mouse moves to either side of the screen. Can be viewed at [www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories](http://www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories).*

### **1.3 Deliverables**

The deliverables for this project are two-fold. First, on the practical side, a facilitator's guide was created to be used while viewing Inside Stories. Interviews with staff were held so that staff could provide feedback in the development of a facilitator's guide that they can then use in the groups with which they work. As a result, SVNH staff and program delivery staff at other organizations will have a facilitator's guidebook to use with the Inside Stories website. The final product can be found in Appendix E and will be distributed via pdf document to SVNH and SHNS.

On the research side, two focus groups were held for neighbourhood house participants in which they had the opportunity to hear stories from others in their community, learn about digital stories, and share their feedback on Inside Stories. SVNH will have concrete evidence about the impact of the website on its own and when used within groups as an activity. It is often challenging in the nonprofit sector to find the resources to conduct a study on a project if it was not already part of the original grant or project proposal. This report will provide recommendations to SVNH on where to go next with Inside Stories and digital storytelling in general.

### **1.4 Organization of the Report**

This report begins with background information necessary to understand the project, including the histories of SVNH and SHNS; the development of Inside Stories; the Settlement Movement history; demographics for Vancouver and South Hill in particular;

the political background relating to funding settlement work and more specifically the Welcoming & Inclusive Communities & Workplaces Program. A literature review follows the background information, providing an overview of approaches to immigrant integration and digital storytelling in community development. The following section outlines the methods used to conduct the study followed by the results of the staff interviews and two focus groups. The report concludes by providing a discussion of the results and a number of recommendations for SVNH and its partner SHNS to consider as they move forward.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

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This section provides background information on the client, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, and the secondary client, South Hill Neighbours Society as well as an explanation of their relationship. A brief history on the development of Inside Stories follows in order to better understand the motivations and intentions behind the website. To provide greater context about neighbourhood houses and their ultimate goals and purposes, the Settlement Movement is outlined briefly. Following this is an overview of the demographics in the South Vancouver area to provide the reader with an understanding of the cultural diversity and reasons for a project like Inside Stories. Finally, a short history is given about the funding programs for welcoming communities which in part explains the need behind increasing the long-term sustainability of a project such as Inside Stories.

### 2.1 Client Information

#### *South Vancouver Neighbourhood House – Primary Client*

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH) is the primary client for this project. SVNH is part of a regional umbrella organization, the Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC (ANHBC), which in turn is part of an international network of similar organizations, called the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers (IFS). While ANHBC has been operating since 1894, it was not until 1977 that the Frasersview Action Society became SVNH and joined the Association (ANHBC, 2010; Larcombe & Yan, 2010). Being part of ANHBC means that SVNH shares their mission, which is the following:

- We are a volunteer-driven community service agency
- Our mission is to make neighbourhoods better places to live
- Our goal is to enable people to enhance their lives and strengthen their communities
- Our challenge is to work with communities to develop innovative programs and services that meet the changing needs of a diverse population (ANHBC, 2010, “Mission”)

Each year SVNH serves 10,000 people in an area between Main Street and Boundary Road, from 41st Avenue south to the Fraser River (see Fig. 2). When the current executive director, Karen Larcombe, started at SVNH, it was largely a service delivery organization. Today, such services include settlement and integration support for newcomers to Canada, family support, domestic violence support, seniors information and referral, seniors programming, Preschool and Out-of-School Care, and after-school children and youth programming. In 2007 Larcombe and the Board set their strategic direction to bring back the community development roots so common in some of the first neighbourhood houses that originated in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. In this context, community development means that staff try to engage community residents in assessing the needs of the community rather than staff telling the community what its needs are. It means that community members are encouraged to build their skills and confidence to help themselves and are provided with opportunities to do so at the neighbourhood house. And it also means that community members take on leadership roles in the community

rather than only staff taking on these roles. Today, service is still the backbone of the organization because of the demand in the community and the financial stability that it can provide for the organization, but community development has now become embedded in much of the service work and has initiated multiple projects in areas such as food security, literacy, and neighbourhood activism. One such example is the South Hill Neighbours Society, discussed as the secondary client in the next section.



*Figure 2: Vancouver, BC with the South Vancouver area in the red box (adapted from Google Maps, 2013). The stars mark the locations of neighbourhood houses, with SVNH being the star located in the red box.*

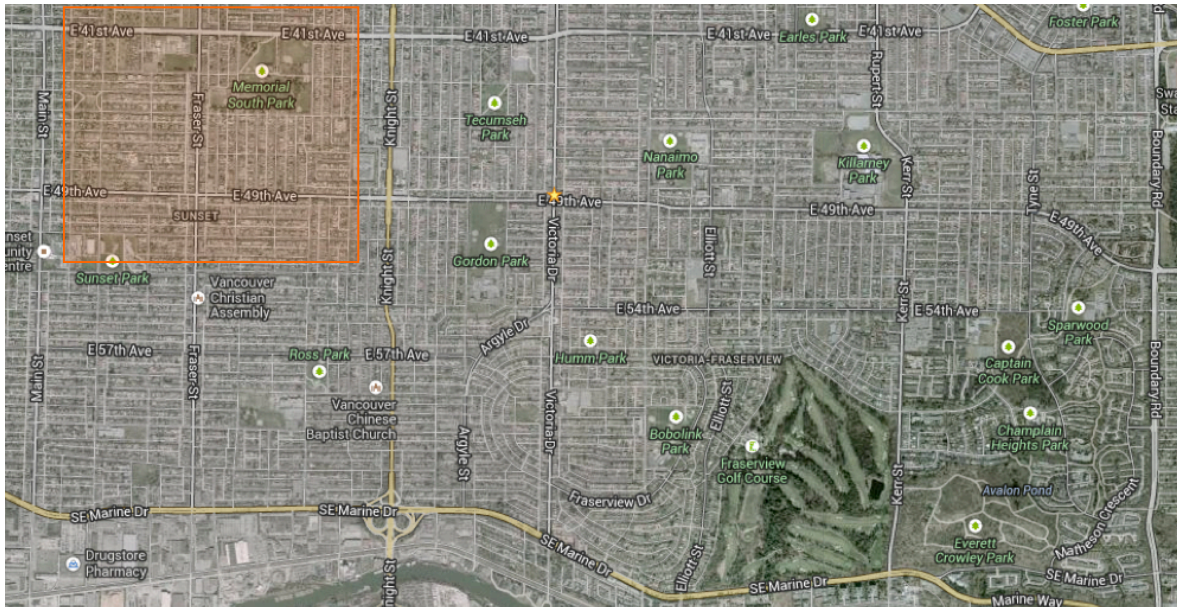
### *South Hill Neighbours Society – Secondary Client*

The South Hill Neighbours Society (SHNS) is a grassroots group of neighbours living in the South Hill community, a particular section along Fraser Street in the Sunсет neighbourhood of South Vancouver (see Fig. 3). A group of local residents started gathering in response to a number of concerns in their community, such as: “the lack of a shared neighbourhood gathering space, drug dealing activity, increasing garbage in alleys and a feeling of decline in the commercial strip” (Larcombe, 2008, p.2). As part of her Master’s in Social Work thesis, Larcombe worked with the emerging group to help build their leadership skills and to develop a community vision and plan for South Hill. She also helped them to become more organized. The group decided on the name SHINE, or South Hill Initiative for Neighbourhood Engagement. They have since been renamed as the South Hill Neighbours Society and are now incorporated as a society in British Columbia. Larcombe notes that they changed from being “a loosely connected social network of friends and neighbours to [being] a more formal neighbourhood association with defined mission, guidelines, and goals” (p. 61). As found on their website, the SHNS vision statement is as follows:

We envision South Hill Neighbourhood as a vibrant, welcoming, safe and harmonious community that celebrates and embraces respectful interchange between people of all ages and backgrounds; a caring neighbourhood that promotes

sustainability, encourages participation and fosters pride. (South Hill Community, 2013, “About – Vision Statement”)

Today, SHNS is active in their community and is committed to creating a welcoming place for people to live. This commitment is evident in their leadership role with Inside Stories.



*Figure 3: This is a zoomed in view of South Vancouver as identified in Map 1 (adapted from Google Maps, 2013). The shaded orange area shows the South Hill neighbourhood, centred around the Fraser Street commercial hub. The gold star is South Vancouver Neighbourhood House.*

## **2.2 History of Inside Stories**

Inside Stories was created in response to a request for proposals for a public education project from the provincial government’s three-year pilot called Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP). WICWP was one of the province’s programs for newcomers, but focused more on educating those who are longtime residents about the benefits of immigration and how to create a community that is welcoming to a newcomer. Another key focus was bringing together both newcomers and longtime residents in activities or events (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation, 2012). WICWP will be explained further in section 2.5. SVNH applied for a project they titled “A Centennial Legacy Video: South Hill Integration Stories.” The original concept for the project is as follows from the executive summary of SVNH’s proposal:

This project will develop a digital media resource that will profile the stories of local immigrants who have contributed to South Vancouver over the past decades. 2010 is the centennial year for the South Hill neighbourhood, a South Vancouver community that has been shaped by various waves of immigration. This video & online project will use interviews, photographs and old film footage to capture the stories of people from various ethnic communities who have lived in and influenced South Hill. The interviews will highlight strategies for addressing the

challenges of integrating into a new neighbourhood and share insights gained through experience. (2009, p. 1)

As stated in the above quote and explicitly in a section titled Goals and Objectives, the goal of the project was to learn from immigrants who had integrated into the South Hill community. The project's two stated objectives were

Objective 1: To increase awareness and appreciation among all residents of the role new immigrant communities have played in shaping the South Hill neighbourhood

Objective 2: To provide recent immigrants, long time residents, and organizations with a tool that will provoke discussion and ideas regarding the issues and process of integrating into and transforming a local neighbourhood. (SVNH, 2009, p. 2)

Part of their dissemination plan was to create a video viewing guide that community leaders could use to facilitate discussion when viewing the video. One of the measurable outcomes was to measure the number of video viewing sessions in the community and to survey those who had viewed Inside Stories after each viewing session. In practice, the SHNS coordinator created a set of discussion questions that filled this role. The facilitator's guide developed as part of this research project used her questions as the basis of the guide. Due to various changes in the project and feedback from their chosen documentary filmmaker, Nettie Wild, the full video viewing guide and survey of those who attended viewing sessions were not completed and this project will help to fill in these gaps. In the first interim report, an explanation was provided:

After discussion with Nettie and extensive review of digital story-telling, it was decided that the stories could be told best in an interactive web-based setting rather than using the traditional more linear method of a DVD-based documentary. The decision was made to integrate [a] web site ... and the video integration stories to get a more artistic, accessible, and creative tool for community engagement and connection. (SVNH, 2010, p. 2)

The creative team was made up of Nettie Wild, a web designer, a photographer, a SHNS community organizer, another member of SHNS, and SVNH executive director. They identified 12 potential storytellers who each had an initial meeting with the team. In the end, only nine stories were completed because three people chose not to continue with sharing their stories. Storytellers were from: India, Germany, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Columbia, Holland, Afghanistan, and First Nations. Interviews were up to two and a half hours in length and were edited down to one to seven minute stories. The photographer took black and white photographs to reflect the stories.

The last major action on Inside Stories occurred in 2010. A website launch was held in Spring 2010 in the South Hill community with each of the storytellers present to be recognized at the end of their story. A second larger event was held in late 2010 at the downtown branch of the Vancouver Public Library which brought in many people who did not live in South Hill or even South Vancouver. Small discussions led by the community organizer with SHNS have been held in some of SVNH's programs in more recent years. However, there has been no movement towards making the website usable by other community leaders or program facilitators, which this project addresses.

### 2.3 Settlement Movement History

The Vancouver area neighbourhood houses and SVNH in particular are rooted in the Settlement House movement that began in London in the late 1800's on the East Side of the city where the working class lived in difficult conditions. The start of the Settlement Movement is often cited as being Toynbee Hall. This was a place in London that formed when Samuel Barnett invited university graduates to live in a poor district where they organized educational, recreational, and cultural activities for the local residents (Abel, 1979; Husock, 1992). The focus of their activities was to bridge relationships between the poor and the middle class (Abel; Husock; James, 2001). Those involved early on in the Settlement Movement were interested in forming relationships with local residents and supporting them in developing their personal capacity. The movement was also interested in problems at the scale of the community in contrast to traditional charitable work which had focused solely on addressing individual problems (Abel; Brown & Hannis, 2008; Husock, James). Those who were in the movement believed social problems were a result of distrust and a lack of interaction and connections between people in a community (James). Similar issues are at the core of this project: a lack of trust between people of different cultures and social isolation. Settlements addressed these problems by bringing together people of different classes (in the case of London) or cultures (in houses that later became established in the United States).

Jane Addams visited Toynbee Hall and was so impressed with it that she brought the idea back to the United States where she started Hull House in Chicago, one of the most well-know settlement houses in North America (Abel, 1979; Brown & Hannis, 2008; James, 2001). Addams' Hull House in Chicago used a capacity-building approach to support immigrant families in adjusting to their new community while keeping their history and culture (Brown & Hannis). In this context, capacity-building means building up the skills and abilities of immigrant families to feel more confident in their new community and to advocate for and to help themselves. Settlement houses spread all over the United States and into Canada, particularly larger cities like Toronto and Vancouver that faced similar problems (James), such as industrialization, and poverty (Koerin, 2003). Helping new immigrants adapt and integrate into their new community was another large focus of North American houses in which they promoted the ideals of citizenship and democracy (Husock, 1992; Koerin). Although a similar model to the British Settlement House, the North American houses had a different demographic:

Settlement activists in both Canada and the United States focused the majority of their attention on the growing, and increasingly visible, non-Western European immigrant populations in their midst. Addressing what they argued were the unique needs of these immigrants, American and Canadian settlement workers made comprehensive citizenship training one of their key goals. British workers in contrast, concentrated on building cohesive community in a social environment deeply divided by class. (James, p. 3)

Some of the British settlement houses had religious undertones, particularly those whose leaders were religious. North American settlement houses, on the other hand, were more secular than their British counterparts and were meant to be neutral spaces that welcomed all religions and races (James, 2001); in fact, Husock (1992) described them as

community “living rooms” where people of all types could come together. Four features of current neighbourhood houses based in Vancouver include (Yan, 2004):

- 1) Place-based and locally governed: they understand and can respond quickly to the needs of the community
- 2) Humanistic and democratic values: they welcome everyone and are inclusive of the community; they encourage ownership and citizenship in the community
- 3) Holistic view of human needs: they do not simply provide solutions to individual problems but attempt to look at the whole person and the whole community
- 4) Combine multiple services and community building activities: they provide services for all ages in addition to community development and social change activities

Another interesting feature of neighbourhood houses is the strong volunteering component, which aligns with the community building activities listed above. South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, for example, has over 300 volunteers every year who contribute in various ways. Many volunteers help to lead programs. A good example of the community development approach is a community member who first comes to the neighbourhood house to receive services, who later gets involved in some sort of leadership training, and then who eventually leads a program. Abel (1979) notes that both participants and volunteers benefit from their activities. Vancouver’s neighbourhood houses, including SVNH, play an important role in contemporary society and it is important to understand how they can continue to do the work that they do while staying current with changing demographics, immigration trends, and technology.

## **2.4 Vancouver, South Vancouver, & South Hill Demographics**

Vancouver neighbourhood houses work with a very diverse population. Overall, the Metro Vancouver population is growing and the immigrant population within Vancouver is also growing. In 1991, 29.7% of the Metro Vancouver population were immigrants, while in 2011 that proportion has grown to 40% (Metro Vancouver, 2013). If looking at other Canadian cities, Vancouver’s cultural diversity is comparable to places like Montreal and Toronto where immigration plays an important role in providing an influx of people for the workforce. China, India, and the Philippines remain the top source countries (Metro Vancouver), which is reflected in the demographics of South Vancouver. South Vancouver is made up of three city neighbourhoods: Sunset, Victoria-Fraserview, and Killarney-Champlain. SVNH is located in Victoria-Fraserview but provides services offsite in all three neighbourhoods. According to the most recent census data (Statistics Canada, 2011), over 95,000 people live in South Vancouver with approximately 36,000 of them in the Sunset neighbourhood, where South Hill is located and Inside Stories is based. Residents were asked to identify their mother tongue in the 2011 census, and of people whose mother tongue is English, Sunset in particular has a lower percentage than both Vancouver and South Vancouver. Panjabi, Hindi, Cantonese, Mandarin, Chinese that was not specified, and Tagalog are the largest language groups in the area. See Table 1 for further details.

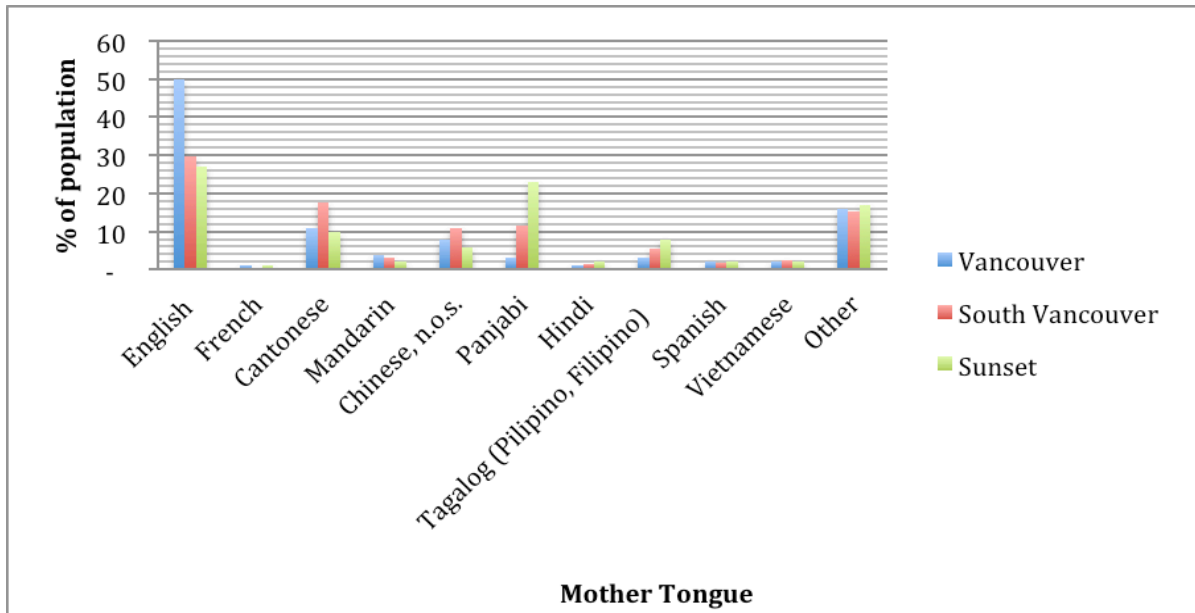


Table 1: Percentage of the population speaking different languages as their mother tongue in Vancouver, South Vancouver, and Sunset (Statistics Canada, 2011)

Mainly a residential area, South Vancouver is also home to a few commercial hubs along Main Street between 49th and 57th, known as the Punjabi Market; Fraser Street, between 41st and 53rd, which is home to a wide range of culinary tastes from the immigrants that make up the community; Knight Street, a busy truck wayfare bringing goods into Vancouver which creates a walkable/bikeable divide in South Vancouver; Victoria Drive, between 57th down to Kingsway, which is outside of the South Vancouver boundaries but is a busy shopping hub with many ethnic grocery stores and a shopping mall at 41st and Victoria; Kerr and 54th as well as Elliot and 49th are home to shopping centres and are natural community gathering places. There are three high schools and multiple feeder elementary schools; two community centres; three libraries; three business improvement associations; and a number of non-profit organizations such as Boys & Girls Club, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, SUCCESS and PICS, both immigrant-serving organizations. The area has a higher number of single-parent families and seniors (Statistics Canada, 2011). The majority of homes in the area are duplexes or smaller apartment buildings fewer than five stories (Statistics Canada); this could account for the number of houses that are divided into multiple residences due to high housing costs and the various mixed-use zoning where apartments are housed above commercial businesses. Single-detached homes are the next largest dwelling type followed by row houses, mainly in the Killarney neighbourhood (Statistics Canada). The diverse and urban nature of South Vancouver and South Hill in particular is important when thinking of how to build a welcoming community. Both factors play a role in the literature on integration and multiculturalism and will be discussed further in section 3, the literature review.

## 2.5 Immigrant Settlement Funding History in Canada

Inside Stories has a strong focus on immigration and was borne out of a funding body directed at working with immigrants. This section will provide background information

on the political factors around immigration, funding, and how they affect this particular project. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) has typically been responsible for overseeing settlement funding across Canada. They are responsible to parliament and are guided by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), which states that integration involves engagement of both newcomers and the host society, emphasizing a belief in two-way integration (Burr, 2011). In recent years CIC has reformed the way they want service organizations to deliver immigrant settlement services; they have developed what they call a “modernized approach” to settlement (see Table 2). This approach consists of programming in the following areas: needs assessments, information and orientation, language and skills training, employment-related support, community connections, and support services (Smith, 2010).

<b>CIC’s Settlement Program</b>	
<b>Expected Results</b>	<b>Activity Streams</b>
<p><b>Orientation</b> – Newcomers make informed decisions about their settlement and understand life in Canada</p> <p><b>Language Skills</b> – Newcomers have language/skills needed to function in Canada</p> <p><b>Labour Market Access</b> – Newcomers obtain required assistance to find employment commensurate with their skills and education</p> <p><b>Welcoming Communities</b> – Newcomers receive help to establish social and professional networks so they are engaged and feel welcomed in their communities</p> <p><b>Policy and Program Development</b> – To ensure effective delivery and achieve comparable settlement outcomes across Canada</p>	<p><b>Needs Assessment &amp; Referrals</b> – determine eligibility, assess needs, and refer newcomers to other services</p> <p><b>Information and Awareness Services</b> – provide pre- and post-arrival information</p> <p><b>Language Learning and Skills Development</b> – language and skills development training</p> <p><b>Employment-related Services</b> – search, gain, and retain employment</p> <p><b>Community Connections</b> – establish a social and professional network</p> <p><b>Support Services</b> – help to access settlement services</p>

*Table 2: CIC’s Settlement Program. Adapted from Smith (2010)*

CIC originally funded and directly managed BC’s settlement services until they developed an agreement with the BC government – known as the Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009; Province of British Columbia, 2013). The agreement was first signed in 1998 and was renewed until this past year when CIC decided to resume management of the contracts starting in April 2014. In the mid- to late- 2000’s, BC received more funding than they had in the past which led to strong settlement and language training services and the development of

new and innovative programs and pilot projects, such as the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP) (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009).

Welcoming Communities, a part of the federal government's settlement program vision, is about two-way integration. Smith (2010) writes:

Welcoming community projects support newcomers to form social networks and connect to the various dimensions of Canadian society while also engaging communities and neighborhoods to welcome newcomers and support their full participation in the community. Activities focus on individual and community bridging. (p. 3)

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (WICWP) was a program under the Immigration Integration branch of the provincial Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training from 2008-2013. Its goal was to target the host community in addition to the newcomer, which aligns with the branch's overall approach that integration is a two-way process (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation, 2012). The Ministry identified a number of key factors leading to a community that is perceived to be welcoming by immigrants, including forming intercultural relationships, having mutual trust, and being free from discrimination (see Fig. 4). Indicators include immigrants reporting that they are able to communicate with people from different ethnic backgrounds and are comfortable working with them. Other indicators involve newcomers feeling that he or she can trust the community, and in turn is trusted by his or her community (2012).

The WICWP website states that a new program was expected to start in the Fall of 2012 (Province of BC, 2013a); however, the announcement of CIC resuming management of settlement funds in British Columbia has halted these plans. Without this additional project funding, settlement organizations and others will need to find ways within their existing funding to foster inclusive communities. Some may decide that they do not have the resources to do this, which means that there is a possibility that this work will be neglected. It is therefore all the more timely to share Inside Stories as a tool that can be used within existing groups by existing staff or community leaders as a way to address the issue of welcoming communities. WICWP was developed because it was recognized that newcomers only have so much capacity to adjust to their new community; the host community has its own part to play in creating an environment that will support and include newcomers (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009). It is unfortunate that WICWP will conclude, because as Hiebert & Sherrell say:

The WICWP program is perhaps the most interesting of all, since it is the first attempt of policy experimentation in the fourth type of regime. WICWP is based on the belief that society must prepare itself for newcomers, which involves engagement with a much wider array of partners than ever before. (p. 28)

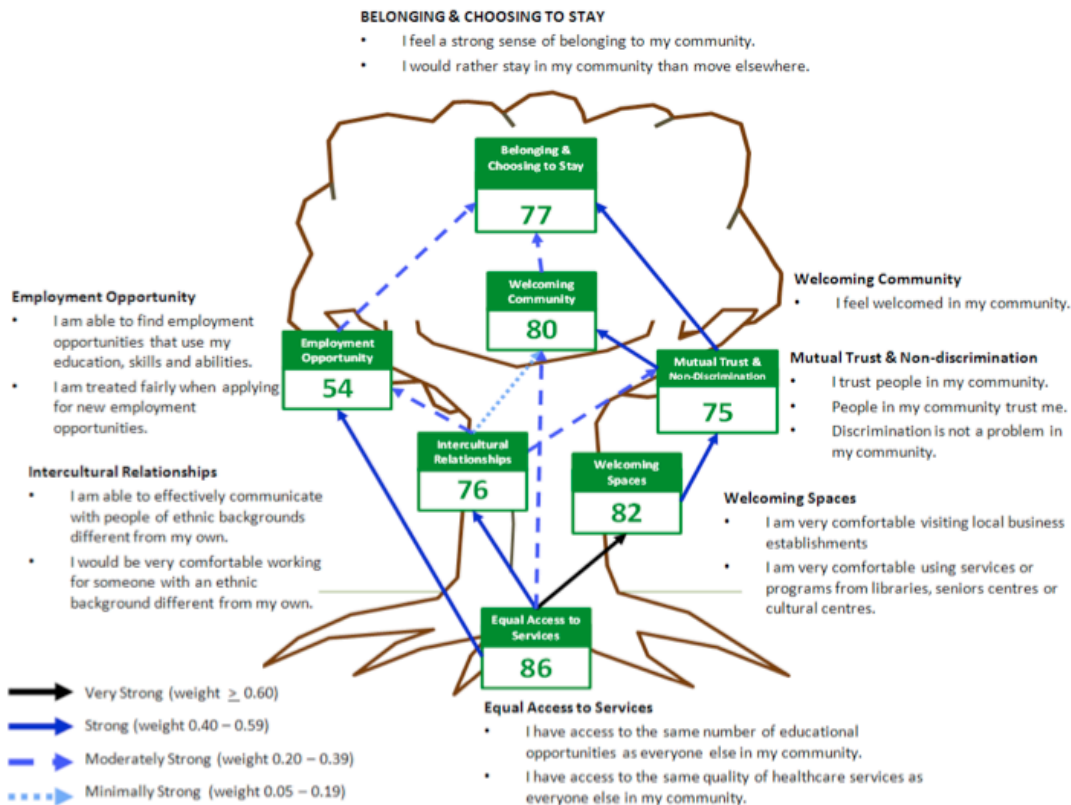


Figure 4: “Putting Down Roots in the Community Model” from “Understanding Immigrant Experiences in BC Communities: A model of welcoming communities” (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation, 2012)

As demonstrated in the section about demographics above, the diversity in Vancouver will not be going anywhere anytime soon. The number of immigrants to Canada each year over the past ten years has hovered between 220,000 and 280,000 (AMSSA, 2012). Both the provincial and federal governments cite an anticipated labour shortage in Canada (Alboim & Cohl, 2012; Government of BC, 2012). BC expects 1 million job openings in the coming years, but only 650,000 students are currently enrolled in K-12 to fill those jobs. They propose to fill one third of total job openings with immigrants (Province of BC, 2012). The continuation of immigration and the existing cultural diversity suggest that finding ways to build communities that are open to newcomers and people that might be “different” from someone else will remain an important task. This report examines how Inside Stories can play a role in supporting some of the factors that contribute towards a welcoming community. While Figure 4 identifies a number of factors, Inside Stories focuses on two of those. The first is intercultural relationships, which according to the figure 4, moderately supports the second factor, mutual trust & non-discrimination. Mutual trust & non-discrimination strongly supports welcoming communities and the ultimate goal that newcomers will feel a sense of belonging and choose to stay in their new home country.

It is important to understand the diverse community in which Inside Stories is located as well as the history of its development, including its purpose and funding origins. The cultural diversity and isolation found in the urban setting of Vancouver explains the reasons for creating a public education tool that aims to encourage understanding across cultures and the development of social networks. The follow section provides a literature review on some of the theories behind building more welcoming and inclusive communities as well as the use of digital storytelling to do so.

## 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

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This literature review focuses on two main areas relevant to *Inside Stories*: integrating newcomers and digital storytelling. In the section on integration, an overview is provided on the different approaches taken to integrating diverse communities; this section also discusses the importance of belonging, no matter the type of approach taken. Furthermore, it examines the role of social capital in creating a welcoming community, including its origins, effects, and generation. The meaning of a social anchor is also discussed, as well as the implications for building social capital. The second section defines both storytelling and digital storytelling. It examines both the role of the process and product of digital storytelling in community development and highlights a few key criticisms of digital storytelling. This review is not exhaustive but is limited to some of the more relevant literature to *Inside Stories* in particular.

### 3.1 Integration of Newcomers

As is evident by the demographics in the background section above, Vancouver is a culturally diverse city. Canada is similarly diverse, with a combination of aboriginal people, earlier settlers such as the British and French, and settlers from all around the world. Citizenship Immigration Canada's (CIC) settlement program (Burr, 2011) and the provincial Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2009) are both examples of how Canada has made efforts to live in harmony with such diversity. Existing literature denotes a number of approaches that can be taken to integrate immigrants. These approaches can be assimilationist, multicultural, or intercultural.

The first approach, assimilation, comes from a perspective where "social cohesion [is] based upon the likeness and similarities among individuals in a society and largely dependent on common rituals and routines" (Durkheim in Wilson, 2006, p. 350). Assimilationist approaches require newcomers to adapt to the host society and form common bonds with those living there; this tends to create a monoculture society (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2010; Soroka, Johnston & Banting, 2006). Graham & Philipps (2006) believe this approach views diversity as something to be "managed." An assimilationist approach fails to recognize the complexity of a diverse population. Furthermore, and less obviously, it fails to achieve its own goals of social cohesion and equity. Assimilation was designed to build social cohesion by developing commonalities to create one unified society, but if it does not provide things such as services or supports for marginalized populations then social cohesion is jeopardized (Rodriguez-Garcia, p. 255).

Multicultural approaches recognize, protect, and even celebrate diversity (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2010; Soroka, Johnston & Banting, 2006). This seems to be the approach that Canada promotes and teaches in schools (Creese, 2005). Like assimilation, a number of issues also arise with multiculturalism. Some believe that it can lead to parallel societies (Rodriguez-Garcia) or ethnic enclaves, promoting radical religious or political groups (Soroka, Johnston & Banting). At the same time, it can also lead to marginalization within the same cultural group, in particular for women (Rodriguez-Garcia).

Multiculturalism can also give rise to “token” cultural recognition, by celebrating cuisine, music, and clothing and failing to recognize some of the deeper complexities and variances of culture (Kymlicka, 2010). Finally, multiculturalism in Canada still places those of Anglo-European descent in a dominant role (Creese).

Interculturalism takes multiculturalism one step further and not only recognizes cultures but also encourages interaction and social exchange between people of different cultures (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2010). Interculturalism is active, rather than static and as Sandercock notes (2003a), it typically involves having dialogue, talking through conflict, and negotiating identities. Sandercock writes that we must construct “new ways of living together, new forms of spatial and social belonging” (pp 12-13). Durkheim viewed society as an organism, constantly changing, with interrelated and interacting parts (Wilson, 2006). An intercultural society is fluid and always changing, and is constantly creating new identities as a result of the diversity that has come together (Rodriguez-Garcia; Yan, 2004). Table 3 summarizes some of the key differences between each of the approaches: assimilation, multiculturalism, and interculturalism.

<b>Assimilationist</b>	<b>Multicultural</b>	<b>Intercultural</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Newcomers must adapt to host society</li> <li>○ Monoculture</li> <li>○ Diversity is “managed”</li> <li>○ Based on shared values, common bonds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diversity acknowledged and protected</li> <li>○ Can lead to parallel societies</li> <li>○ Can lead to token representation of cultures (i.e. food or dress)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ People living together in diversity</li> <li>○ Interaction and social exchange between all people</li> <li>○ Dialogue, negotiation and conflict resolution</li> <li>○ Societies are fluid</li> </ul>

*Table 3: Three different approaches to integration*

Of these three approaches, Rodriguez-Garcia (2010) believes most recent and Western approaches to integrating immigrants have been assimilationist, with multiculturalism running a close second. However, these approaches do not have to exist in isolation (Soroka, Johnston & Banting, 2006) and in fact, in Canada, all three approaches seem to exist. The Canadian government believes that shared values will bring people together (Soroka, Johnston & Banting), which is more of an assimilationist approach. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) believes that integration is a two-way process and much of the literature has discussed this approach as well (Biles & Winnemore, 2007; Burr, 2011; Kymlicka, 2010; Rodriguez-Garcia; Sandercock, 2003a). They believe that immigrants do need to adapt to their new host society as per assimilationist approaches, but that host societies also need to adapt to having newcomers in their community, which is more aligned with multicultural or intercultural schools of thought depending on how it is put into action. Sandercock explains that both immigrants and host societies can experience fear, anxiety, or hope. In Canada, discussions around Aboriginal and Francophone inclusion are also a factor to be considered (Soroka, Johnston & Banting). With these elements, belonging becomes a very important part of integration.

### *3.1.1 Communities, Belonging & Social Ties*

Community has multiple meanings, but in many cases and for this report's purposes it is used to indicate a group of people who interact in some way and have commonalities including common connections, behaviours, beliefs, interests, or location (Brown & Hannis, 2008). We often talk about the importance of belonging to a community in order to facilitate proper social cohesion.

The need to construct communities seems to be a deep and universal feature of the human condition (Tully 1995). In a world of globalizing cities, there are many ways of belonging to many kinds of community, which are not territorially defined or bounded. Nevertheless, place-identification and a sense of belonging to a place do not seem to have diminished in importance for most people. And that sense of belonging is usually inseparable from the ties to the particular human community that inhabits the place.

(Sandercock, 2003a)

This quote highlights the importance of belonging in community building. If we want to build community, then people must feel like they belong; unfortunately, some Canadian studies demonstrate that those who are not part of the dominant Anglo-European culture can find it difficult to find a sense of belonging in Canadian society. The first example is from Soroka, Johnston and Banting (2006), who conducted a diversity analysis of existing Canadian surveys (Equality, Security and Community Survey from 2002-03; Canadian Election Study from 2004) and analyzed sense of belonging, among other markers. They found that all groups, including Francophone, Aboriginal, Southern European, Eastern European, South Asian/Middle Eastern, East Asian and Caribbean African feel less of a sense of belonging in Canada than those who are part of the British/Northern European group, particularly those who are visible minority immigrants. Another example is a study conducted by Creese (2005) in which she held focus groups with women of colour who had migrated to Vancouver. She found that women who migrated as refugees felt that Canadian citizenship was important because it provided safety but that it did not mean they felt like they belonged or felt a sense of community. As time went on, one of the women felt more Canadian but less of a connection to her community; she found that the Canadian way of life tends to be more hectic allowing less time for personal connections (p. 20). Creese concludes through her study that "'Canadian' remains a bordered space that only partially admits immigrants of colour" (p 24). Both studies demonstrate the difficulties faced by many newcomers to Canada in finding a sense of belonging.

In the quote above, Sandercock (2003a) implies that one cannot feel a true sense of belonging without developing social ties to the people that live in that community. In this context, social ties are defined as the relationship and connection between two individuals. DeFilippis (2001) notes that "social ties based on trust and networks among immigrants have helped them prosper...That has been a feature of the immigrant experience for quite some time" (p. 792). However, not all social ties are equal. There can be strong and weak ties. Granovetter (1973) denoted the strength of ties based on the amount of time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocity (p. 1361). Strong ties were characterized by greater amounts of time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocity,

while weak ties were characterized by lesser amounts. He argued that although strong ties had typically been associated with social networks, weak ties also played a significant role in social networks in that they could help to bridge and integrate a person into a new community. Putnam (2000) also describes different types of ties as either bonding or bridging. Bonding ties are typically seen as being stronger, between people who are similar, and can help group members “get by” (Agnitsch, Flora & Ryan, 2006; Clopton & Finch, 2011). These ties strengthen homogeneity, whereas bridging ties have typically been associated with increasing the diversity of social networks. Bridging connects people based on their common interests, rather than common ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic status. Bridging ties are weak but, in line with Granovetter’s findings, help people “get ahead” (Agnitsch, Flora & Ryan; Clopton & Finch). For example, a bridging tie is likely to be between people who are dissimilar which has the result of connecting individuals with resources outside of his or her network. It is often associated with getting connected to a job opportunity. While one might think that one type of tie is better than another, Agnitsch, Flora & Ryan found that it does not matter whether someone has more bonding or bridging ties but that having one, the other, or both types at high levels will contribute to greater levels of community action than low levels of both.

Linking back to the initial integration approaches, some believe bridging is more effective in creating a multicultural society, while bonding tends to create ethnic enclaves (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, & Solomos, 2007). Putnam (2007) describes two additional theories: contact and conflict. Contact theory argues that the more we are in contact with people who are different from ourselves, the more we will become accepting and trusting of them. Conflict theory, on the other hand, argues that the more diverse community in which we are located, the more people tend to stick to their own ethnic groups and trust others less. Using his bonding and bridging terminology, contact theory suggests diversity encourages bridging, while conflict theory sees diversity as encouraging bonding. In his study, however, his findings show that neither contact nor conflict theory are in line with the realities of American communities today. Rather, diversity seems to encourage social isolation and distrust of their neighbours no matter their race; in other words, it is more of a “constrict theory” (Putnam). These findings align with the Vancouver Foundation’s (2012) findings that people in Vancouver are socially isolated. However, it is unclear whether this is due to diversity or whether it is due to being located in an urban setting.

### *3.1.2 Social Capital*

Social capital is another concept that has been linked to building stronger communities. The term social capital refers to the value in the relationships within one’s social network (Bridger & Alter, 2006; Coleman, 1988; Edwards & Foley, 1998; Portes, 2000; Putnam, 2000, 2007). People have recognized that there is value in human relationships for a long time. One of the first records of social capital use in literature, aside from its roots in classical sociologists like Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, (Wilson, 2006) was in the context of successful schools in Western Virginia by L.J. Hanifan (Agnitsch, Flora & Ryan, 2006; Bridger & Alter; Putnam, 2000). A few key theorists brought social capital to the fore in the 1980’s-1990’s, including Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam, and Portes. Johnston & Soroka (2001) categorize social capital work into two different categories, where some

focus on the connections and networks of social capital, while others focus on social capital as being a “psychological property” (p.2) that is typically demonstrated through trust.

The value of the relationships in social networks means that there is some sort reciprocal exchange (Putnam, 2000, 2007). Some examples of what might be exchanged include repairing someone’s car or watering a neighbour’s plants while they are away. Similarly, Putnam believes social capital means that there is an understanding that someone in one’s social network will eventually reciprocate; it may not be the same person that you had helped, but it will be reciprocated. It is almost like karma or even a loose barter system. This reciprocation means there must also be a significant level of trust, which is often one factor that is analyzed when measuring social capital. This dependence on one another is again linked to Durkheim’s analogy of society being an organism: “the order and survival of society depends on their reliance on each other to perform their specific task” (Wilson, 2006, p. 350). Others take a more economic approach and describe social capital as the investments or returns of relationships (Lin, 1999). It is important to distinguish between social capital at the individual and at the community level. Putnam believes that the benefits of social capital are not just at the individual level; a person can be part of a community that has high levels of social capital overall and not even participate in the activities contributing towards social capital, but can still benefit from the community’s collective social capital (Bridger & Alter; Clopton & Finch; Putnam, 2007). Others, such as Coleman (1988), focused solely on the individual’s social capital.

Social capital can have both positive and negative effects at both the individual and the community level. Some believe social capital is inherently good and that it can benefit employment prospects, health, happiness, safety, education, democracy, and the economy (Putnam, 2007). Studies have been conducted to demonstrate the positive effects of social capital on career advancement (Burt, 1992, in Agnitsch, Flora & Ryan, 2006, p. 38) and education and school dropout rates (Coleman, 1988). It can also be a form of reinforcing social norms, providing family support, and building extrafamilial network (Portes, 2000). Temkin and Robe (1998) found that neighbourhoods with higher levels of social capital were more stable (in Agnitsch, Flora & Ryan, 2006, p. 38). There is no agreement as to the effect on certain aspects of society. For example, some studies demonstrate a positive influence on health (Tampubolon, Subramanian & Kawachi, 2013) while others found that it had little to no effect (Veenstra, 2005; Veenstra, Luginaah, Wakefield, Birch, Eyles & Elliott, 2005). One of the negative effects of social capital identified by Weber was ethnic tension, a result of strong social ties and social bonding (Wilson, 2006). Similarly, DeFilippis (2001) notes that ethnic enclaves can form as a result of social capital and Soroka, Johnston & Banting (2006) identify radical political or religious groups that have developed as a result of social capital. Portes (2000) sums up the negative effects of social capital as excluding outsiders who are different, facilitating the free riding off successful group members, encouraging conformity while restricting freedom, and opposing the mainstream. An example of how social capital can have both positive and negative effects comes from a Canadian study. Lamba (2003) conducted a study in which he measured the effect of network ties on successful employment outcomes for people who came as refugees to Canada. Many refugees arrive with what is

considered low human capital in a Canadian context; they may have less formal education or their credentials may not be recognized. To compensate, refugees tend to rely on social capital instead. Using close personal ties enabled refugees to find better quality employment. However, Lamba also found that relying on close ties who only have connections to survival-type jobs can have a negative effect; furthermore these ties cannot effect barriers such as lack of recognition of foreign credentials.

### *3.1.3 What Generates (or Impedes) Social Capital*

If social capital can have positive social benefits, then how can communities increase social capital? A number of ideas exist. Lin (1999) identifies literature that explored ways in which social capital could be changed: Bourdieu believed it was the volume of social ties within social networks, Burt thought it was the positions of networks, Flap suggests network size, relationship strength and types of resources. Bridger & Alter (2006) believe that relationships are most important to social capital and therefore face-to-face interaction time will help to increase social capital. Some studies have shown that ethnic diversity can impede the levels of social capital in a community; however, there is some question as to whether it is ethnicity or other factors that lead to this effect (Aizlewood & Pendakur, 2005). Aizlewood & Pendakur analyzed the 2000 Equality Security Community Survey and found that in Canada it is more urban lifestyle than ethnic diversity that impacts social capital. They found that in larger cities, people were less likely to participate, trust, and socialize. Visible minority and immigrant status were not entirely without effect, but they were less significant than community size.

### *3.1.4 Digital Technologies & Social Capital*

Mandarano, Meenar & Steins (2010) have concerns about how online interaction rather than face-to-face interaction may inadvertently exclude some people because not everyone has computer or internet access. They also note the concern of how digital technology, such as online forums, cannot replace the value of face-to-face contact in developing social capital. Social networking sites where people can interact with one another (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) tend to have the greatest potential to contribute to social capital (Mandarano et al). Hampton, Lee & Her (2011) find that traditional ways of building networks (i.e. being involved in volunteer activities, religious institutions, visiting public spaces) played a very clear and important role, but that technology with a focus on social media contributed towards a more diverse network of ties. In contrast, they found that social networking sites contributed to people being less likely to know their neighbours. Technology likely allowed their network of ties to be more widespread rather than local.

### *3.1.5 Social Anchors*

Putnam (2000, 2007) spends a great deal of time discussing the importance of having a place in the community to generate social capital. He focused on voluntary associations, volunteer-based, membership driven groups such as Lion's Service Clubs or professional associations. These associations allow lots of time for face-to-face interaction and opportunities to build trust and relationships. Social anchors are another way of building social capital and social networks. Social anchors are "any institution ... that acts as a support for the development and maintenance of social capital and social networks"

(Clopton & Finch, 2011). A social anchor will support both bonding and bridging capital, though more emphasis is placed on bridging. It is a place for people of all demographics to feel like they belong (Clopton & Finch). Neighbourhood houses seem to be one of the social anchors that fill this role in Vancouver. Bridger & Alter (2006) describe community as having a specific place or locality, a local society, a common identity, and collective actions. Clopton & Finch believe social anchors must align with this definition of community to be effective. They also believe they must “enhance or construct a sense of community, trust, or reciprocity within social networks” (p. 72).

In Vancouver, neighbourhood houses (NH's) play a significant role as social anchors. In fact, much of the current research on local NH's address networks, social ties and social capital. A 2006 study (Yan & Lauer) conducted stakeholder and neighbourhood house interviews and focus groups about the bridging role in which NH's play with new immigrants. They found that settlement service funding fails to recognize the long term settlement process and the role that NH's play long term in addition to short term. Common characteristics of NH's such as being place-based, providing multiple services, employing diverse and also multilingual staff, being welcoming, and providing volunteer opportunities all contribute to the NH ability to act as a bridge between newcomers and their new community. Through surveys with members, they also found that there tends to be two types of volunteer and member involvement: targeted and general. Targeted involvement is shorter, focused and intense; individuals may bring other household members, visit often, and attend particular types of programming. General involvement is longer, more diverse, and less intense. They found that 82% of survey respondents agreed that NH's helped connect them to new people.

Another study examined the role played by neighbourhood houses in the formation of diverse ties among new immigrants to the city (Lauer & Yan, 2010). Lauer & Yan go back to the two types of involvement in neighbourhood houses, or other voluntary associations: targeted and general. They found that “targeted involvement increases diversity of personal ties that cross immigrant status and helping ties that across ethnic boundaries. General involvement decreases diversity of personal networks that cross immigrant status and has little or no effect on cross-ethnic helping ties” (Lauer & Yan, p. 13). Their findings suggest the importance of the way in which members are involved in voluntary associations, not just the type of voluntary associations. This is important when thinking of Putnam's (2000) belief that all voluntary association involvement is good; it may actually depend on how the members are engaged.

This first part of the literature review has outlined some of the common approaches to integration in Canada and provided an explanation of why a welcoming community is important. It has also outlined the role of a sense of belonging and the importance of social ties and social capital. The following section will discuss how a tradition such as storytelling can be combined with digital technology in order to develop some of the factors such as belonging and social ties that contribute to welcoming communities.

### 3.2 (Digital) Storytelling

Storytelling has long been a part of the human experience and is typically used as a way to pass down information generation to generation. Much of the literature on storytelling focuses on its ability to impact human connections. For example, Hustedde (1998) defined stories in the following way:

Stories are how we organize our thoughts and experiences and how we share them with others. They tell us who the community is and what it is not. They also link people in the present to the past, and in doing so, create a sort of temporal community solidarity. They also highlight what is meaningful about a particular place and people. They can contribute to group solidarity because they transform experiences and segments into meaningful themes. (p. 157)

Similarly, Tossa (2012) describes “effective storytelling [as] a form of communication from the heart of the storyteller to the heart of the listener” (p. 200). These definitions inform this project’s approach in examining digital storytelling within a community development context.

Why is storytelling a tool that is often used in community development? The answer to this question is based on an understanding that community development work must incorporate mind, body, and soul (Hustedde, 1998), with the mind focusing on the intellectual, the body on the physical and the soul on the emotional. While much effort is often devoted to conducting research and best practices (mind) or meeting community member’s basic needs (body), soul is less tangible and can be easily forgotten. Storytelling is one way to bring soul to community development practice and will be explored in more depth. In contrast, Zipes identified political activism in the late 1960’s as the root of storytelling in community development because of its ability to question and challenge the status quo and dominant system of values (as cited in Little & Froggett, 2009). Connecting to soul and affecting transformative change are key features of community development, and thus strong reasons for using storytelling in community development work.

Following Hustedde’s (1998) theory of integrating soul into community development, storytelling can be used to bring in emotions. This emotional component can bring people together and foster a more inclusive community. Horsley (2007) explained that the shared experience of a story can create a bond and build networks. She noted that there is a commonality in the storytelling experience that is unthreatening and that can bring together diverse groups of people. Furthermore, many cultures take that commonality even further because they share similar stories. At the same time, individuals regardless of culture share similar stories and can often identify with someone else’s story. A story can provide insight or inspiration to someone with a similar struggle (Bell, 2009; Marcuss, 2010; Rossiter & Garcia, 2010). Stories can be used as a way to build connections and work through conflict (Bell; Freidus & Hlubinka, 2002; Horsley).

Linking back to Zipes’ theory on the use of storytelling to challenge social injustices, Senehi et al. (2009) explain that oppressive systems tend to disconnect, disassociate, and dislocate people from both their personal, social or cultural histories and stories. Reclaiming a voice, or one’s story, can challenge that system. Stories can challenge

prejudice, discrimination, and racism and allow all voices to be heard, even those that are normally quiet (Bell, 2009; Horsley, 2007). As a result storytelling can be empowering for an individual, as it either constructs one's own identity (Ball-Rokeach, Kim & Matei, 2001), develops a new skill or builds understanding and connections to others, and sets the stage for dialogue around deeper issues (Bell, Horsley).

### *3.2.1 Digital Storytelling Meaning*

In this report, I refer to digital storytelling (DS) to mean the combination of personal first-person narrative combined with multimedia in a short video format that can be shared electronically, rather than the term associated with computer gaming. Lambert (2013), Hartley & McWilliam (2009a), Meadows & Kidd (2009), Hartley (2009), Simondson (2009), and Helff & Woletz (2009) have all identified the "democratization" of media to be one of the key defining features of DS. Those in the media business are no longer the only ones who are able to tell a story; voices are given to those who were previously unheard. Another description of DS is a combination of the old (i.e. the art of telling stories) with the new (i.e. photos, video, web technology) (Rossiter & Garcia, 2010; Rule, 2010). Lambert's definition of DS tends to include a three-day workshop component that involves building technology skills and a relationship between facilitator and storyteller, but this project expands the definition to include those that are not created in the exact same format.

What are the implications of adding the word "digital" to storytelling? Lambert (2013) believes that the technology opened up possibilities for everyone to share their story; those who were previously not heard could make their voices heard (Meadows, 2010; Rossiter & Garcia, 2010) by using technology that was more accessible than traditional film production. Furthermore, participants not only create their own story in the DS process, but they edit it too which takes power back from the media and puts it into the hands of the storytellers (Meadows). Rule (2010) also notes that media typically creates a distance between viewers and the storyteller, whereas DS reduces that distance by using the first person. Finally, the voice of the storyteller has the ability to evoke the warmth of human intimacy, in contrast to a lot of traditional media that is narrated by someone else (Burgess, 2006). Burgess explains that digital stories can help to build social connectivity and empathy because viewers can relate to the shared language or experience, such as cliches, that are typically found in digital stories.

The other unique characteristic about digital storytelling is that it captures the story and stores it to be viewed at a later time by the storyteller or others. The ability to view the story later allows for a different kind of reflection and learning (Rossiter & Garcia, 2010) that was not possible in oral storytelling. Rossiter & Garcia also emphasize the importance of hearing own's own voice in the reflection process:

We have a a moment of seeing ourselves as someone other than our Self...we can see and hear ourselves as one who is worthy of compassion and understanding. This is an empowering experience of affirmation, which can stimulate deep learning and insight. (p. 43-44).

Digital storytelling can have many of the impacts that storytelling has as identified earlier in this section. Adding the digital component, however, provides new opportunities for

sharing and reflection across a wider net of audiences. With DS, the audience could be across the world and not just the room.

### 3.2.2 *Digital Storytelling Process*

Digital storytelling in its various forms is used across multiple disciplines (Rossiter & Garcia, 2010); the health sector (Benson, 2012), higher education (Jenkins & Lonsdale, 2007), K-12 education (Kajder, 2004), historical institutions (Klaebe & Foth, 2006), and planning departments (Sandercock, 2003b) have all used DS to contribute to their work. As a community development tool, Freidus & Hlubinka (2002) suggest that digital stories can help to share knowledge and empower communities.

Digital storytelling is often used in a social justice and social change context, aligning with some of reasons that traditional storytelling has been used in community development. For example, Silence Speaks is a project with the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in which survivors of domestic violence tell their stories (McLellan, 2006). This is akin to art therapy and is a way of empowering the survivors but it also educates, informs, and perhaps even inspires viewers to take action. Both the process of creating the story and the final product of the stories themselves play a role in this project. Another example is with the Center for Reflective Community Practice and Creative Narrations. They train community organizations in DS and develop projects to support organizations' missions (Marcuss, 2010). Other examples of DS are with indigenous groups, often around connecting young people with elders. It is seen as particularly effective because it:

integrates indigenous stories and sacred places and artifacts in innovative ways, is created by and for indigenous communities, addresses change, reflects community knowledge and perspectives, and enables negotiation of the community's social priorities. (p. 32, Iseke & Moore, 2011)

Digital storytelling is especially effective in community development because of its ability to provide a voice to underrepresented populations, and spark dialogue about community and societal issues.

### 3.2.3 *Digital Storytelling Product*

Much of the literature on digital storytelling is about the process. However, what happens after the story has been created? Is the final product as useful in community building as the process? Rossiter & Garcia (2010) believe that "a story is only rumination until it is shared" (p. 42). A number of projects have gone on to hold events or to share their stories on various web platforms (Benson, 2012; Lalor, 2009; Tacchi, 2009). For example, a project aiming to raise awareness of flooding shared their information by using Web 2.0 technologies including Vimeo, Flickr, Voicethread, and a Wordpress blog integrated into their site. They also partnered with other organizations and institutions to help share the stories via their own web-based communications (McEwen, Jenkins, Wilson & Lannin, n.d.). An intergenerational project held an event for the community where they shared their stories, launched a two-week exhibition following the event, and completed another series of stories based around different but related themes. Next they will be creating a printed publication of the stories (Davis, 2011). Staff at one organization told their own personal stories of how they came to do the work that they do

and why, and shared it with clients of the organization. This connected them with neighborhood residents and a train-the-trainer model was then developed to further engage residents (Freidus & Hlubinka, 2002).

Many have identified the importance of dialogue after viewing stories (Marcuss, 2010; Ready, 2002; Tacchi, 2009). Sobol (2010) defines the very nature of storytelling as being within a small, face-to-face group. By this definition, DS should include some component of discussion after the story has been produced. Paulus, Horvitz, & Shi (2006) found dialogue to be important because it allows viewers to compare their experiences with those in the story and others in the group. A project around drug & alcohol use with youth held group discussions immediately after viewing the stories by using engaging activities. For example, facilitators might ask a question and have participants move to different parts of the room based on their response (Coleman & Ramm, 2008). Coleman & Ramm believe that the group discussion component needs proper planning, a very structured lesson plan and a discussion guide when working with youth. Others suggest a lighter approach to facilitate dialogue with adults, such as by posing a question or topic to encourage participation in a discussion (Benson, 2012). Using dialogue can even spark viewers to take action. A project that showed personal health-related digital stories in community forums followed by discussion was able to inspire people to act on various public health-related issues, both at the policy and the community level (Benson).

### *3.2.4 Evaluation of Digital Storytelling*

Evaluation of digital storytelling projects is an area for further research; much has been written about its definition, case studies and potential uses, but formal evaluations of digital stories in which their impact is measured are less prominent. Among the existing literature about digital story evaluations, many of them are with those individuals who have participated in the storytelling process. For example, Bell (2009), Davis (2011), and McEwen, Jenkins, Wilson & Lannin (n.d.) delivered surveys and conducted interviews with storytelling participants to assess their learning and the impact that it had on them. In all cases, participants either felt it had a positive impact on their learning, especially regarding social issues, or participants formed social relationships with other group members. Thus it is clear that the process in which people create their own digital stories has a positive effect on those individuals.

A few projects evaluated the sharing of stories and how they were used post-production. One project created a website to share stories and piloted it for feedback before making it public (McEwen, Jenkins, Wilson & Lannin, n.d.). They also used Google analytics to measure the frequency of use of their website. Another project held community forums to share their stories (Benson, 2012). They evaluated these through observation and surveys; they also monitored any type of actions taken by attendees after the event. One of the key points about the forums was that the stories were able to humanize health statistics and issues, causing more people to take action after attending a forum and viewing the stories. Among the standard surveys, interviews, and focus groups, a unique tool for evaluating stories emerged. Little & Froggett (2009) identified the re-telling of stories as a way to assess the impact of a story. They noticed that certain stories had

more appeal and impact than others, and when a person re-told it, they were able to include more detail.

### 3.2.5 *Criticisms & Challenges*

Digital storytelling has many benefits as identified above. Community development organizations are increasingly creating digital stories to further their cause, like those in education, health care, and so on. Despite its widespread use, some have criticized it for its sentimental and individualistic nature, its teacher-centric methods, and its dissemination challenges (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009). These criticisms are based more on the nature of digital storytelling itself. Others have noted more practical challenges, such as the inflexibility of having a recorded story rather than being able to modify a story each time it is told, like traditional oral storytellers can do; once a voiceover has been recorded, the digital story becomes static (Rossiter & Garcia, 2010). Technological challenges also exist, due to software and computer technology constantly evolving. How can small non-profits keep up with the pace of change? The Center for Digital Storytelling is working on some strategies to address this challenge (Lambert, 2013). Institutional constraints are another challenge. For instance, stories may be owned or controlled by the institutions that lead DS projects (Burgess, 2006). Compromises sometimes have to be made with stories due to institutional, technological, or cross-cultural influences (Davis, 2011). Finally, Senehi et al. (2009) note the importance of the facilitator in addressing many of the challenges of DS. The workshop process of creating a story can be emotionally charged. The success of DS can be determined by the skillfulness or lack thereof of a facilitator. Because of this, digital storytelling can be both constructive and destructive.

The literature behind welcoming communities explains the importance of belonging in developing a sense of community as well the importance of social ties. Social ties are one way in which social capital in a community can be increased, which can be another factor of a welcoming community. Neighbourhood houses have traditionally been social anchors in the community, or places that can help to build those social ties needed to foster belonging. Storytelling can also be a way to develop bonds in a community, and digital storytelling is a relatively new way of doing this. The impact of the process has been well documented, but less has been recorded about the impact of the final product, such as Inside Stories. The following section outlines the methodology used in this project to evaluate the impact of a digital storytelling website on viewers and to identify potential ways to increase its impact, such as through facilitated activities.

## 4.0 METHODOLOGY

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This qualitative study explored how Inside Stories could contribute to building trust, connections, and understanding in a diverse community both as a stand-alone website and with facilitated activities. The following section outlines the setting of the research, the participants involved in the research, the materials and measurement instruments, the data collection process, and the analysis process. This section also addresses other factors to consider in the methodology such as limitations and ethics.

### 4.1 Setting

This study took place at South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, located on Victoria Drive in Vancouver which is a commercial hub of small businesses in a mainly residential area. The interviews were conducted in a private office at SVNH, except for one which was conducted by telephone. The two focus groups were conducted in a large multipurpose room at SVNH. The stories were projected onto one wall, and the flip charts with the questions were hung on another wall. Participants sat in a semi-circle so that all could see both walls. During the facilitated activities in the second group, participants sat in a full circle and occasionally broke away in pairs or as individuals depending on the activity.

### 4.2 Participants

A purposive sample was used in which participants in relevant groups were invited to participate in the focus groups. Those who were invited could choose to volunteer to sign up. The focus group participants were recruited by staff at SVNH and SHNS; however SHNS was unable to find any participants. Therefore, all focus group participants had some connection to SVNH. In early July a sample was distributed of an email for program delivery staff and the SHNS community organizer to share with their participants (see Appendix 10.1) with both a consent form (see Appendix 10.2) and brief summaries of the stories to be shown (see Appendix 10.3). A poster was also displayed at the front desk of the SVNH reception area (see Appendix 10.1). Some interested participants spoke with me prior to signing up to ask questions about the focus groups.

Two focus groups were held on July 26. In the first focus group, 12 female participants attended. They were a mix of ages and cultural backgrounds, including: Hispanic, Chinese, First Nations, Anglo-European, and Black. Prior to the second focus group, a total of 7 participants had signed up ahead of time, however only 5 actually attended. The 5 participants were a mix of cultural backgrounds: Chinese, English, Indian, and Scottish. Four of the attendees were older adults and one was a younger adult (ages ranging from 20's – 70's). Three were female and two were male.

A similar method of recruitment was used for the interviews. In early July an email was sent out by the office manager to program delivery staff (see Appendix 10.1). Three staff replied and scheduled interview times. The SHNS community organizer also scheduled an interview. The interviewees received a draft of the facilitator's guidebook by email and they were asked to review it prior to the interview. The three female and one male

interviewees were adults in their 30's and 40's and worked with a combination of adults and seniors in their roles. Chinese, South Asian and Caucasian cultures were represented.

### **4.3 Materials**

Inside Stories was the primary material used in the focus groups. The website contains a series of nine stories and space to send in one's own story on a "postcard." Five of the stories were used in the focus groups due to time constraints. These stories included the following:

- Claudia's story: Claudia is from Latin America and she struggles with the loneliness and exhaustion of immigrating to a new place and learning a new language and culture while raising two children
- Ben's story: Ben immigrated from China to Vancouver after a difficult early life and started a tailor shop on Fraser Street; although it was challenging at the beginning, he has now been in business over 20 years
- Erwin's story: Erwin is from Germany and he immigrated after the Second World War; his wife is deceased and Erwin has found happiness and friendship in his connection to a Chinese gospel singing group
- Jinder's story: a local librarian, Jinder, immigrated to Vancouver as a child after her father had already immigrated years ago; although it's a difficult relationship with her father, he introduced her to one thing that has influenced her career choice: the library
- Sherry's story: Sherry and her neighbours have found a way to get to know each other and share skills with one another; they teach each other English and Mandarin

Activities from the facilitator's guide were used in the second focus group. These activities and the whole guide were developed collaboratively. SHNS shared activities that were already in use. Activities were adapted from Project Diversity, a toolkit developed by SPARC BC as part of the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces efforts of the Province of British Columbia. Other activities were developed as a result of researching social capital, storytelling, and diversity education for adults. The guide includes icebreakers and name games; a process for developing a group agreement; discussion questions for each of the stories; main activities; closing activities. The first activity invites participants to think about times when they experienced their own inclusion and exclusion. The second activity is a game in which participants experience being welcomed or excluded. The third activity asks participants to identify from a list actions they have taken to build social capital and actions they want to commit to taking after the session. The final activity is a storytelling exercise where participants write a story on a recipe card in response to a story prompt and then share it in a story circle. Appendix 10.5 has the full version of the facilitator's guide.

#### **4.4 Measurement Instruments**

The two focus groups used a series of the same questions to assess the effect of Inside Stories or the activities on participants. These questions were based on some of the indicators of a welcoming community identified by the Ministry for Jobs, Tourism and Innovation (2012). The first focus group participants were asked the questions immediately after viewing the stories. The second group was asked after viewing the stories and engaging in facilitated activities. The first questions addressed whether Inside Stories is clear in its purpose (What do you think was the purpose of Inside Stories?). The second and third questions were designed to inquire about individual actions. Would participants take action after Inside Stories? What kinds of actions would they take? The options for the third question were taken from an instrument designed by the Saguaro Seminar (2002) as a way to measure social capital, such as volunteering or trusting one's neighbours. Rather than discussing it as a group, participants received colour-coded stickers and participated in a form of "dotmocracy" on the flip charts. The fourth question was about finding out the things that really stuck with participants or made an impression (What is one thing that surprised you about the stories?). And finally, the fifth question was looking for ideas and suggestions on where to go next (How could SVNH and others use Inside stories to create more welcoming communities?).

Interviews with staff were designed to get feedback on the facilitator's guide to make improvements so that it would be useful for someone without any knowledge of Inside Stories. Questions addressed the strong points of the guide, areas for change or improvement, what those specific changes were, and how the guide could be used. See Appendix 10.4 for a full list of the questions from both the interviews and focus groups.

#### **4.5 Procedures**

The first focus group was meant to simulate viewing of the stories as if the participants were viewing the website on their own, and therefore little background information was provided on why Inside Stories had originally been created. The focus group took place in the Rec Room at SVNH. A projector was set up to view the stories and chairs were placed in a semi-circle so that everyone could see each other and the screen. Consent forms were collected and the process for the next one and a half hours was explained. Participants were informed that if they no longer wished to participate at any time, they were welcome to leave. They were also informed of the supports available should they become emotionally distressed after viewing the stories. We then viewed five of the nine stories in succession: Claudia's, Ben's, Erwin's, Jinder's, and Sherry's. After viewing the stories, the questions from Appendix 10.4 were asked. Each question was on a flip chart paper on the wall and I recorded the group's responses, checking for accuracy along the way. One question, also on flip chart, asked if they would be more, the same, or less likely to take certain actions related to social capital after viewing the stories. Participants were given colour coded stickers and asked to place the appropriate sticker by each item. I closed the focus group by asking if anyone had anything else to add that was not captured in the questions.

The second focus group was meant to explore how facilitation could be used with Inside Stories. This group also took place in the Rec Room at SVNH and had a similar set-up,

with chairs in a semi-circle facing the projector and screen. Again, consent forms were collected and the process for the next two hours was explained. Participants were informed that if they no longer wished to participate at any time, they were welcome to leave. Again they were informed of the supports available should they become emotionally distressed after viewing the stories. Unlike the first focus group, some background information was provided about Inside Stories and why it was created before showing any of the stories. The focus group started with one of the facilitator's guide icebreakers called the Story of Your Name in order to recreate what a facilitator would actually do with their group. We viewed the same stories as the first focus group. After the first story, Claudia's, the group was asked one of the discussion questions from Section 4 of the facilitator's guide and continued to have a brief conversation. After Erwin's story, the question about friendships from the facilitator's guide was used to spark a discussion. This involved a group conversation as well as conversations in pairs. After viewing the next three, the group participated in an activity called Telling Your Own Story from the guide. Because Inside Stories really encourages other people to share their story (there is a "park" where viewers can submit a "postcard" with their story), this activity was chosen as the best option in the limited time available. Each participant was given a recipe card and asked to choose between one of 2 prompts from the facilitator's guide related to welcoming neighbourhoods. Participants had 8 min to write, and then came back to the group. We moved the chairs into a circle and agreed on a word ("sunshine") to mark the end of each story. The storyteller held on to an object, and everyone else had the role of listener. Each person read their story and said "sunshine" when complete. The listeners echoed "sunshine" to indicate they had been listening. This marked the end of the facilitation piece and the group was then asked the same questions as in the first focus group, using the same process of recording their responses on flip chart paper on the wall.

The interviews were scheduled at times convenient for each of the interviewees. They were conducted in private offices at SVNH, depending on space availability. Interviewees were informed of the process and that they could discontinue their involvement at any time. The interview questions were asked with clarifying questions added when necessary. Interviewees were invited to ask their own questions and to share any other information that they felt was relevant. Detailed notes were typed during the interviews and read back to participants at the end of each interview to ensure accuracy.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis & Facilitator's Guide Development**

Data collected from the interviews were analyzed first by question and grouped according to themes within each question. Suggestions for changes to the guide were also grouped according to similar suggestions. Changes were made to the guide based on staff feedback once the data was analyzed. Data collected in both the focus groups were first categorized by each focus group question. A coding method was used to organize data into themes and issues related to the research questions. The data from the dotmocracy question was tabulated by each action into more, the same, or less likely. Data from each focus group was converted into percentages and compared to identify any trends.

#### **4.7 Limitations**

Due to the scope of this project, only website viewing and group viewing was assessed as a way of interacting with Inside Stories. The other potential way that Inside Stories had been used in the past was through special events, but was not included in this project due to financial and time limitations. Other limitations include the participants in each of the focus groups; it was difficult to find participants and not possible to have equal numbers of participants in each focus group. Furthermore, the participants who attended were connected to SVNH in some way, either as program participants or volunteers. Due to the type of people that tend to visit the neighbourhood house, they may have been more open to the goals of Inside Stories than somebody unaffiliated with SVNH.

#### **4.8 Ethics**

To ensure that research was conducted in an ethical manner, approval was received by the Ethics Review Board at the University of Victoria. Participants received information about the stories and the focus groups or the interviews ahead of time and each participant signed a consent form before the focus groups or interviews commenced. All participants were informed that they could discontinue their participation at any time. Interview participants were recruited by the office manager at SVNH so that staff did not feel pressured to participate by the Executive Director.

The qualitative methods described above, including both interviews and focus groups, resulted in findings that demonstrated the effectiveness of Inside Stories and how it might be used from both a facilitator's and a participant's perspective. The findings provide some useful insights into the effects of Inside Stories on its own as well as with facilitated activities, which are outlined in the following section.

## 5.0 FINDINGS

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The following section includes the findings from both the staff interviews and the focus groups. The results of the staff interviews provided useful suggestions for the facilitator's guide which have been incorporated into the final version found in Appendix 10.5. A summary of some of these changes can be found below. The results from the focus groups can be found in the section following and is grouped according to three broad question areas.

### 5.1 Facilitator's Guide Development

Three staff from SVNH and one community organizer from SHNS were interviewed as part of the facilitator's guide development. The community organizer was part of the creative team that brought Inside Stories to life, and she was therefore very familiar with the project. Of the three staff interviewed during the facilitator's guide development, one of them was familiar with Inside Stories and had seen some of the stories and observed the South Hill organizer leading a discussion with a senior's group; one had been shown the website by a co-worker but had not looked further into it because it had too many moving graphics and felt overwhelming; the final interviewee was not at all familiar with Inside Stories. Their responses are grouped into the following sections: the most effective parts of the guide, suggestions to increase its effectiveness, general suggestions about Inside Stories, and the practicalities of using Inside Stories.

#### 5.1.1 *Effective Components*

The three staff and the South Hill community organizer were given a draft guide and asked to provide feedback on what parts they thought would be effective in helping to create more welcoming communities, one of the primary goals of the guide. The results of their responses are the following:

- The basics, like the icebreakers and activities especially the Story of Your Name: staff believed that icebreakers were important to start off any group activity and to foster a sense of trust. The Story of Your Name stood out as an effective way to do introductions as well as to explore a bit of storytelling before the activities.
- The stories themselves (watching them) and their discussion questions: they felt that showing the stories to groups would provide positive messages about welcoming communities. One interviewee believes watching Inside Stories and sharing one's own story can help to prevent people from "making pockets within their own community" and can "avoid clashes between communities within a neighbourhood" by watching a story being told by someone from another culture. Another thought that the stories would "encourage conversation" which would also help participants to begin to explore issues such as prejudice, a barrier to creating welcoming communities.
- The social capital exercise: Staff thought this would be a very practical way to build a more welcoming community by allowing group participants to look at the actions that might contribute to this. One staff felt the activity "brings out the best

- of the connections at the community level” and it “[helps] you problem solve at your household” as well as in the community.
- The Labels Game: staff felt this would be an effective activity for those who learn by doing because they would experience how it feels to be both welcomed and not welcomed. This can help to develop empathy and awareness that could turn into potential actions that contribute to a welcoming community.
  - Group agreements: Staff thought that these were essential to any group work because it “lays the foundation of how people should behave within the group;” this helps to form a welcoming group, an important first step before trying to build a welcoming community. One staff explained the importance of group agreements for allowing participants to feel comfortable sharing in her grandparents group: “grandmothers are always sharing their stories... Sometimes they cry, but the rules of the group allow them to feel comfortable.”

### 5.1.2 *Suggestions to Increase Effectiveness*

Interviewees also provided feedback on how to improve the guide to increase its ability to create more welcoming communities. These changes were incorporated into the guide in Appendix 10.5 and have been summarized here.

- **Context:** Provide greater context at the beginning so that people do not think the guide is limited to South Hill; for example, do not include South Hill in the title. To make the guide accessible to those working outside of neighbourhood houses, provide more information about the project and explain who should use the guide.
- **Facilitation skills:** Activity 4.1 (inclusion/exclusion) is best used with a group that is comfortable with each other and best led by a skilled facilitator. An interviewee said that if the facilitator is someone who “thinks everyone needs to go away feeling great, they’re not going to feel comfortable with this one.” The suggestion was to provide cautionary notes for facilitators that people in certain cultures may be less familiar with sharing their own stories; other people may have experienced trauma and may not be willing to share their stories or may react strongly to stories shown. Some facilitators may not be able to handle this. A suggestion was given to explain that the facilitator should create a plan for steps to take if someone does react. Someone provided an example of a similar situation: “[A] co-worker of mine shared with me that when a facilitator worked with a group of seniors about overcoming grief, a community member who would normally be seen as strong broke down crying. It caught the staff member by surprise, so to be able to handle those kinds of situations. You know, talking about being excluded.” A suggestion was also given to include resources on facilitation skills and techniques.
- **Literacy:** English language literacy including reading and writing could be a problem for some participants of groups; in this case, the facilitator would need to adapt some of the activities. The interviewee suggested putting a note at the beginning of the guide to ensure that facilitators keep literacy barriers in mind and that they should adjust activities as needed based on their participants. The interviewee also provided an additional icebreaker that was appropriate for people who had limited English language abilities.

- **Culture:** One interviewee suggested putting a note at the beginning about culture: facilitators will need to use their discretion as they use the activities. This person provided an example of how culture could affect facilitation: “South Asian women may not be able to share as much when there's a South Asian man in the group and vice versa.”
- **Icebreakers & Closing activities:** Interviewees thought that closing activities would be useful in addition to the icebreakers. Two additional icebreakers were suggested to provide other options and to ensure that there were options for participants with limited English language abilities.
- **Specific activities:** Activity 4.3 might be more suited for longer term residents. Newcomers (both immigrant and otherwise) might struggle to think of actions they have taken in their community to contribute to social capital. The interviewee suggested to adapt it to say what you have done or observed in previous communities in which you lived and felt like you belonged. Someone else suggested shortening the 158 activities and making them more relevant to a Canadian context. Someone also thought adopting one of the activities as a group would be a fun way to engage participants in an action. Activity 4.1 listed mainly examples of people being different rather than being unwelcomed. The interviewee suggested changing this to reflect the purpose of the activity.

### 5.1.3 *General Suggestions*

One interviewee commented, “There are no stories about gay and lesbian people.” Although *Inside Stories* was specifically focused on newcomer and host communities based on the funding it received, staff thought that including a LGBTQ perspective was important when discussing welcoming communities. An interviewee also made a good point that immigration can be a good time to discuss these issues. If someone comes from a culture where different sexualities are taboo, it will take some time and some discussions to become familiar with what is normal and accepted in Canadian culture. If the opportunity ever arises to create more stories, interviewees wondered if a LGBTQ perspective could be shared.

### 5.1.4 *Practicalities of Using Inside Stories*

None of the three staff had used the stories in their programs before, but after the interviews all reported being willing to use *Inside Stories* with the facilitator’s guide. One staff thought that it would be useful when working with newcomers and another was interested in using it with seniors during volunteer training sessions; another would adjust some parts depending on which cultural group with which she was working. All reported that they would use the icebreakers and then certain stories depending on the topics. One staff said that the stories could be used “as a metaphor for a way to approach a problem that’s happening within programs.” For example, if participants in a group are newcomers facing loneliness, then the facilitator may want to show stories from Nasrin or Claudia who also struggled with loneliness when they moved to Canada.

In order to ensure the guide would be used, I asked what would be the best format in which to share the guide. A number of ideas arose including:

- A website on which story summaries could be listed; upon clicking on a summary, discussion questions would pop up: One staff thought that this would be an easy way for facilitators to decide which stories they want to show to their group and that it would help to access the information they would need to lead a discussion.
- Having another way to access the stories in case there is no/slow internet access: the wireless internet is unreliable at SVNH and facilitators often work with groups off site where they may not have access to internet. A copy of the stories that could be shown without internet would help to address internet access issues.
- A powerpoint for facilitators could be useful, but they must be able to make edits: Some staff like to use powerpoints to show the discussion questions and activities. Having something made already would make the discussion and activities easier to use. However, because facilitators often like to tweak things based on their group, they must have the ability to make edits.
- Holding a facilitator's training and providing printed copies to participants: One staff wondered if it would be possible to do what many train-the-trainer programs do, which is provide a training to interested potential facilitators to go through the guide and practice some of the discussion questions and activities.

Everyone agreed that a pdf version would be best because it would be easily accessible by email or website and it would be inexpensive compared to printing. They also all agreed that as facilitators, they prefer to have a printed copy and thus being able to print the pdf was important. One staff also mentioned that if she were to have her volunteers use the guide, a pdf version would be ideal so that it could be emailed to volunteers prior to meeting.

The findings gathered through the interviews with staff were valuable because they provided a facilitator's perspective to Inside Stories. The following section outlines the findings from the focus groups, which simulated the experience of watching Inside Stories and engaging in the activities. The participant's perspective combined with the facilitator's perspective helps to create a whole picture of how Inside Stories could be used.

## **5.2 Focus Groups**

The focus group questions have been categorized into three areas: the purpose of Inside Stories, individual actions coming out of Inside Stories, and potential uses of Inside Stories. Informal responses from the focus groups were positive, with many participants expressing their interest in the stories and activities (if part of Group 2) after the session concluded. This demonstrates the potential of Inside Stories to capture an audience and generate interest.

### *5.2.1 Purpose of Inside Stories*

The focus groups were first asked what they thought was the purpose of Inside Stories. Group 1 had only viewed the stories, which simulated someone viewing the stories on their own on the website. Group 2 viewed the stories and participated in some facilitated activities based on the facilitator's guide. The question about purpose was to investigate

whether facilitation could make the purpose more clear for participants or whether it was already clear for the stories themselves. Themes were identified in the responses. Responses from both groups were then categorized according to these themes. Group 1 had more varied responses than Group 2, suggesting that the purpose was slightly more clear for those who had participated in facilitated activities. The belonging theme, for example, was in the majority of Group 2's responses, while Group 1 did not have any one theme that stood out. At the same time, however, both groups were able to identify one of the key purposes of Inside Stories: to help develop community and one's sense of belonging within that community. Figure 5 shows the themes of the responses in both groups, highlighting those in common and those that were specific to each focus group. The following sections focus on the themes found in the most number of responses.

### 1. Belonging & Community

As a theme in the focus group responses, belonging was defined as a key factor in creating a welcoming community. In this context, it means that people feel like they have a place in the community. Belonging stood out as the most important theme overall in the focus group responses and is in line with the goals of Inside Stories. Some responses to the question "What is the purpose of Inside Stories?" that highlight the belonging theme are as follows. One participant in Group 2 stated that he felt the purpose of the website was to help people "not feel alone or lonely" and to let others know that others feel this way too. As he said, "We're all in the same boat." Another participant in Group 1 thought that the purpose of Inside Stories was to get people to "feel a sense of community."

### 2. Taking Action, Inspiration and Social Ties

The second most common responses overall were taking action, inspiration, and social ties. Taking action means that participants responses to the purpose of Inside Stories involved some sort of call for action to viewers. Both groups had responses under this theme. For example, many of the responses to purpose were about showing viewers how to do something, such as:

- How to encourage others who may be facing challenges
- How to get involved in Canadian society
- How to deal with anxiety and isolation as a newcomer
- How to use your talent as a source of income (e.g. Ben the Tailor's story)
- Where to go for a community resource (i.e the library in Jinder's story)

Similarly, the inspiration theme also ties into action. This theme meant that they thought the stories were created to inspire viewers to take action, to think about something in a new light, or to be given hope for their own situation. Both groups had responses under this theme but Group 1 had more than Group 2. Group 1 provided very specific examples related to the stories, such as being inspired by a story to use your talent to earn an income or inspiring a viewer to get through things like anxiety and isolation. Group 2's response was more broad, in that they thought it was meant to inspire people to address challenges in their lives and to provide them with encouragement to keep going.

Finally, social ties was another common theme to both groups though Group 2 had more responses related to this theme than Group 1. Social ties, in this context, mean that the purpose of Inside Stories was thought to encourage relationships and social connections between people. Group 1’s response was very general in that they thought the stories encouraged viewers “to get to know each other.” Group 2 honed in on one of the key parts of Inside Stories: they specified that they thought it was to get to know one’s *neighbours*.

### 3. Interculturalism

The third most common theme between both groups’ responses was interculturalism. This refers to the idea that the purpose of Inside Stories was about bridging the difference between different cultures and encouraging interaction and dialogue between people of different cultures. Group 2 phrased it as believing the intention was to promote multiculturalism. Group 1 thought that the purpose was to show “that people from different cultures can have fun together.”

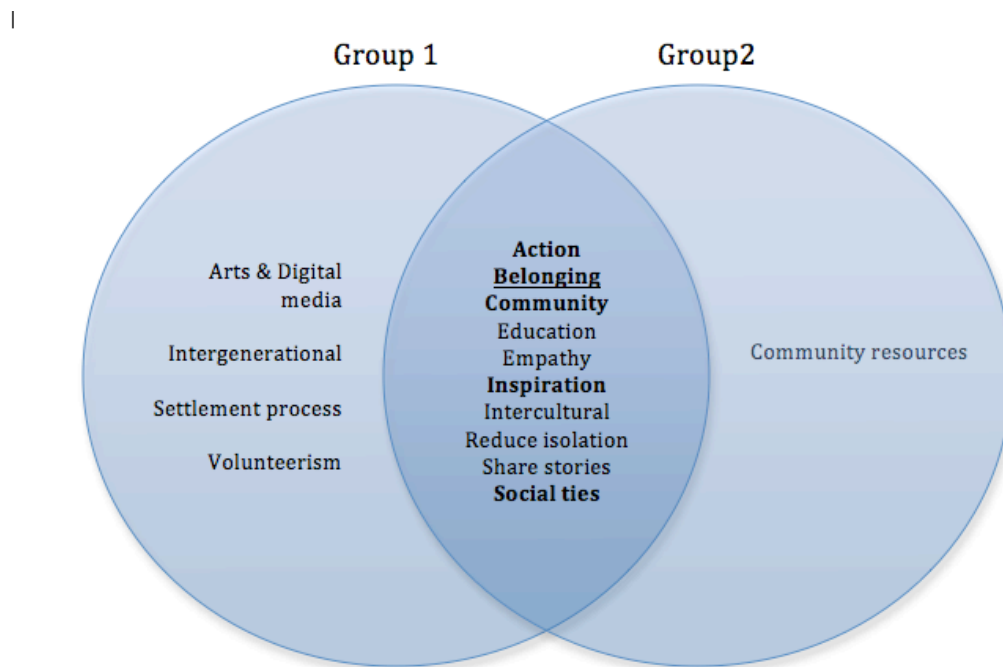


Figure 5: Themes of the responses to the question, “What do you think is the purpose of Inside Stories?”

### 5.2.2 Surprising Moments of Inside Stories

Participants were also asked what surprised them about Inside Stories in order to get a sense of what stands out to people when they watch the stories. The key reactions were how people were able to overcome their challenges, some citing Ben’s story in which he lived through war, poverty, and immigration and still has a positive outlook on life. Others cited Jinder’s story of living with an alcoholic father and immigrating. One person was surprised at how despite the challenges in Jinder’s relationship with him, she was

still able to see the positive in that he introduced her to libraries, now a major part of her life as a library branch manager. Language also came up more than once. People were surprised that language was not a barrier for Erwin and the Chinese singing group. Others were surprised, and perhaps pleasantly so, at how some of the people from older generations were not limited by age. They were still active and enjoying life. One person was surprised at how adult-focused the stories were aside from Hardeep's story and wished there were more youth perspectives. Moving away from specific stories, someone was surprised at how much the stories all had in common and that welcoming people can be found everywhere. These responses illustrate that people will take away different pieces that stand out most based on their own perspectives and life experiences. Many of the responses demonstrate a lesson being taken away by the viewer or inspiration being provided for their own lives. Many of the responses seem to connect with the themes found in the first section about purpose (i.e. inspiration, taking action).

### 5.2.3 *Individual Actions*

Those who responded that they believed the purpose had something to do with viewers taking action after watching the stories were indeed correct. The hope is that viewers are willing to take actions to creating more welcoming communities. In order to find out if viewers were willing to take actions that might contribute towards a welcoming community, two questions were asked in the focus group: one question was open-ended asking actions they as individuals would be willing to take to create a more welcoming community, while the other provided specific examples of actions and asked participants to categorize them into whether they were more, the same, or less likely to take those actions after viewing the stories. For the first open-ended question, both focus groups had similar responses, again categorized by theme. It was anticipated that those in Group 2 with facilitated activities would select activities that were more aligned with welcoming communities. However, both groups had very similar responses with no major differences. This demonstrates that Inside Stories has potential to encourage actions towards creating a welcoming community whether someone views it individually or in a facilitated group activity. The following themes include a number of the responses from both groups about the type of actions they would be willing to take.

#### 1. Simple Everyday Actions

Both groups had the most responses under a theme called Simple Everyday Actions, which included actions like saying hello; smiling to people in your community; making conversation with someone at the bus stop; holding doors for others; asking your neighbours about their culture or language in a respectful way; complimenting a neighbour on their garden or sharing garden vegetables from your own garden; helping someone new to the neighbourhood find directions; and making jokes about the weather.

#### 2. Events

The second most common theme was Events. Event ideas ranged from holding larger events like dances and fundraisers in the community, to local events like block parties or walking tours, to something more private like a support group. Holding events was thought to be a good way to bring different people together. It was implied in their responses that these events would be open to everyone in order to make it a welcoming activity; the challenge of course is ensuring that everyone actually attends these events.

### 3. Information Sharing

Finally, information sharing was the third most common theme. This included sharing Inside Stories on social media. It also included sharing neighbourhood information to people living nearby. For instance, one person gave an example of a neighbour who had emailed her about a recent theft in the area so that she was aware and could be vigilant about security.

There were other examples of actions including sharing one's own cultural traditions and providing mentorship to newcomers in the community. To share cultural traditions, one man said he would be willing to go door to door in his immediate neighbourhood on Boxing Day to greet his neighbours and share a celebratory drink. To provide mentorship, one woman suggested buddying up with someone new to the neighbourhood to help answer their questions and to show them around.

The second question was a form of dotmocracy on flip chart paper in which they were asked to put colour-coded stickers beside actions they would be more likely, the same, and less likely to take after seeing Inside Stories or participating in the activities. An overall view of the responses in each focus group are shown in the diagrams below (see Fig. 6 and Fig. 7). Very few responses stated they would be less likely to take the actions listed. In fact only one respondent in the second group and between 1-3 three respondents in the first group selected this option for some of their responses. See the venn diagram outlining the similarities and differences between the less likely responses. The majority of the less likely responses are politically inclined: attending a political rally, signing a petition, attending a community, city council or school board meeting, and voting. It is unlikely that Inside Stories is the direct cause of participants feeling less likely to participate in these political activities because the stories do not address politics in any way. However, these participants may have already been feeling less likely to participate in these types of activities in general. This cannot be determined without a pre- and post-test of their political activity inclinations.

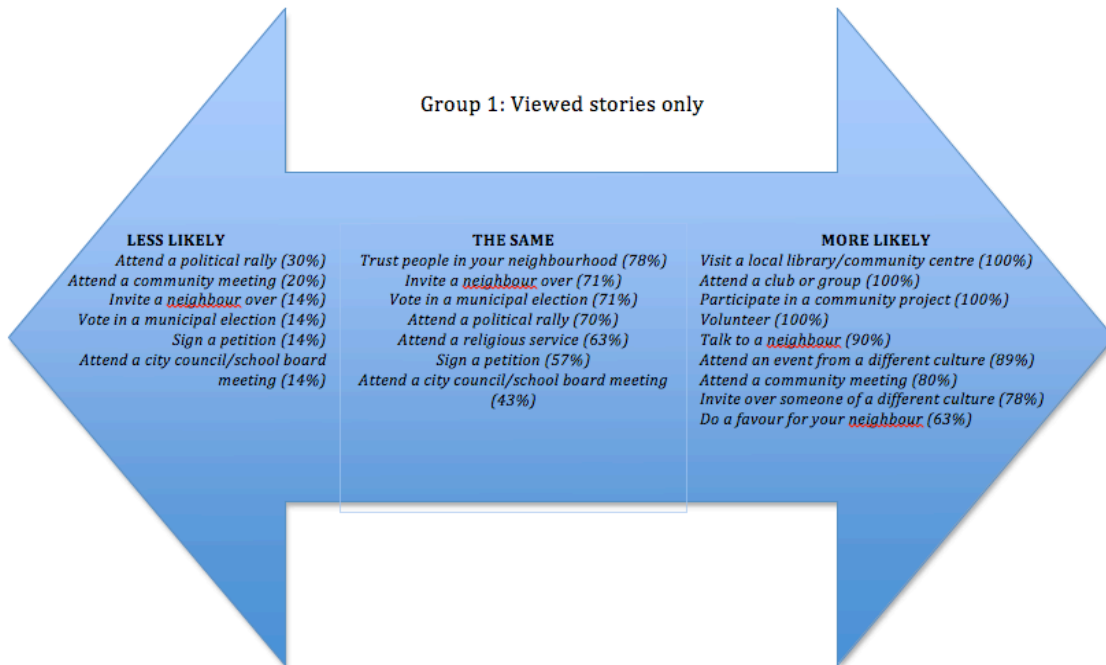


Figure 6: Responses to the dotmocracy question in which participants in Group 1 were asked to rank actions they would be more likely, the same, and less likely to take after viewing the stories.

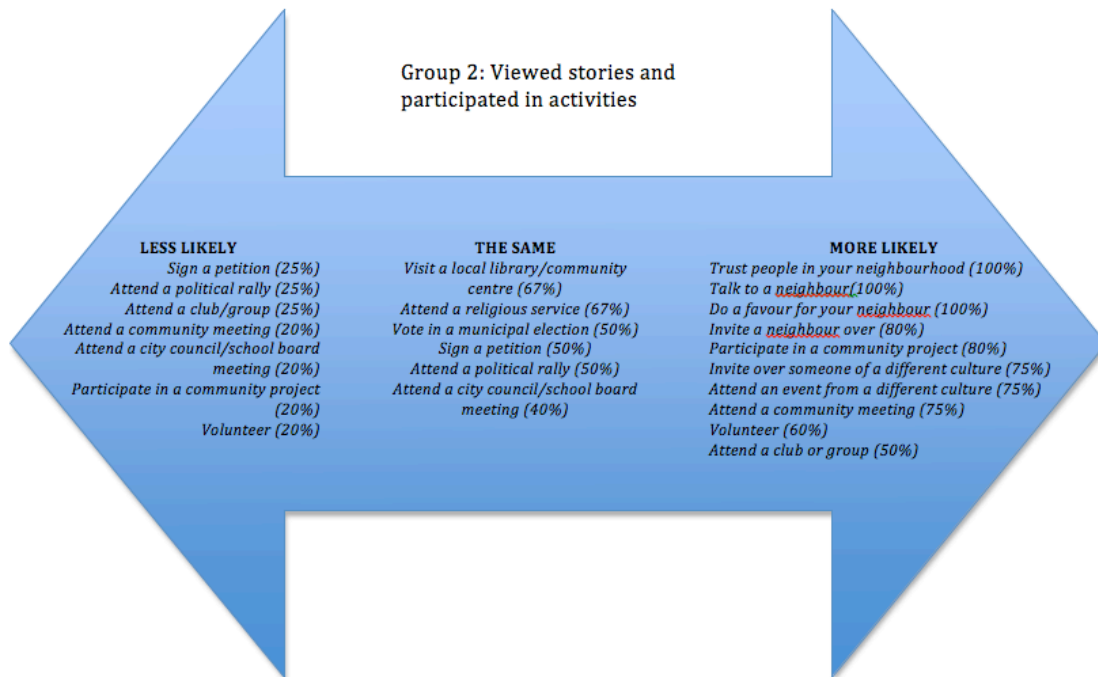


Figure 7: Responses to the dotmocracy question in which participants in Group 2 were asked to rank actions they would be more likely, the same, and less likely to take after viewing the stories and participating in facilitated activities.

Despite the few responses stating they would be willing to take certain actions at about the same amount and the even fewer at a lesser amount, the majority of responses

strongly indicated that most people would be more willing to take a number of actions that would contribute towards more welcoming communities. The top five responses are outlined in the venn diagram below (see Fig.8). Both focus groups noted that they would be more likely to talk to a neighbour and participate in a community event, which are relatively safe activities and require little emotional risk on the part of the participant. Similarly, the rest of Group 1's top six activities are also less risky: volunteering, attending a community event from a different culture, attending a community meeting, and attending a club or group. On the other hand, Group 2 tended to pick activities that required more emotional courage, including trusting people in your neighbourhood, inviting your neighbour over, doing a favour for a neighbour, and inviting someone over from a different culture. Attending an event from another culture and inviting someone from another culture over to one's house is quite different. Group 2 also had a strong focus on neighbours. Although both groups provide positive results for what they would be more likely to do, Group 2's responses align closely with the Inside Stories themes of developing trust, forming neighbour relationships, and forming intercultural relationships.

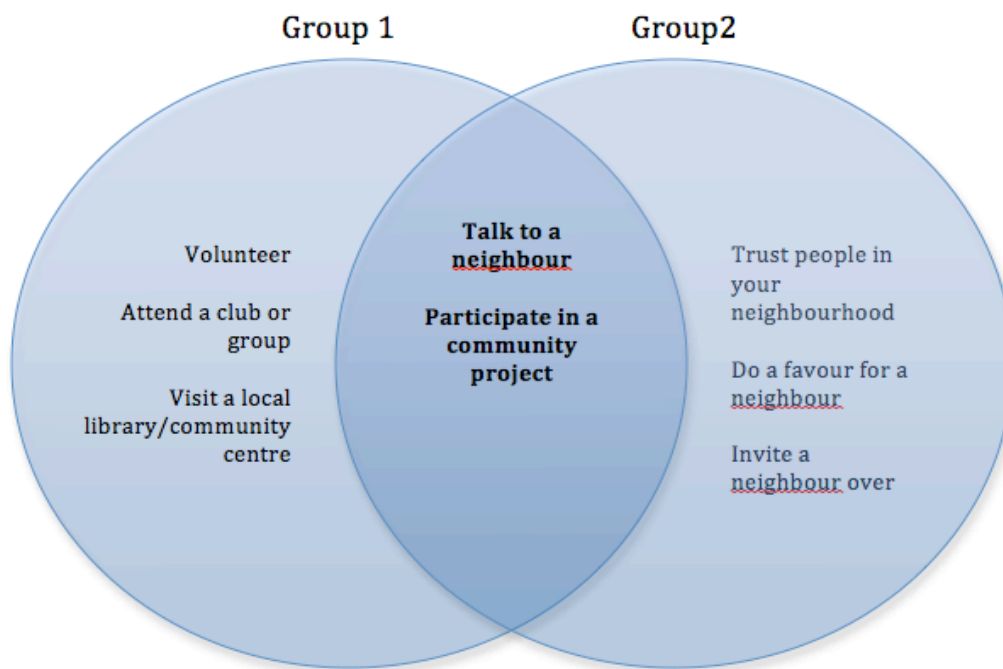


Figure 8: Top five responses to the dotmocracy question in which participants were asked to rank actions they would be more likely to take after viewing the stories or participating in facilitated activities.

#### 5.2.4 Organizational Actions

At the end of the focus groups, both groups were asked for their input into how an organization like SVNH could use Inside Stories to build more welcoming communities. This question was not about assessing the differences between the two groups but rather to generate ideas on where to go next with Inside Stories. Overall, the most common

suggestion from both groups was to have gatherings either at the neighbourhood house or somewhere else to show the stories to more people. Many suggested showing the stories alongside a potluck. Some thought that bringing the stories into existing groups would be beneficial. These suggestions are in line with the goal of this project and the facilitator's guide that was developed in order to take Inside Stories to groups.

Sharing Inside Stories internationally was one of the second most common responses. One woman believed Inside Stories would be a good site to show people before they moved to Canada and wondered if Canadian consulates in other countries could be made aware of the site. She thought that it would be a good way for people to learn a bit more about the culture of Canada and some of the experiences of immigration. The other second most common response was culture sharing. Many participants thought that Inside Stories could be shown and then group participants could share information from their own cultures, such as hobbies, recipes, homemade remedies, traditions, and so on.

Other ideas included making field trips from South Vancouver to other communities to show the stories. This indicated two things: first, that the participants saw themselves being involved after the focus groups and second, that they thought the stories could be valuable for people living in other neighbourhoods. Furthermore, these intraneighbourhood excursions would help to build connections between different parts of the city and create a more welcoming community in a broader sense.

Discussion and food were seen to be important factors in any of the suggestions. If it was an event, they suggested a potluck, or if there was a gathering to share individual's cultures there was an option to share food from their culture. Allowing space for discussion and sharing of one's own story was also seen as important, particularly by those who had experienced the discussions and story sharing in Group 2. Two of the women from Group 2 were passionate about how dialogue could bridge cultural differences. They spoke from their own experience: one of the women is Hindu, while the other is Sikh. They both said that having opportunities at SVNH to have "healthy discussion" about their different religious backgrounds brought them to have greater understanding and they are now close friends.

Finally, both groups strongly agreed that there should be more publicity about Inside Stories. Suggestions included showing Inside Stories at events or festivals in Vancouver. Some thought that one could use social media to increase the awareness of the website. One woman felt that having a prize for people who submitted stories into the "park" of Inside Stories would encourage more interaction with and use of the website. Many commented that they had not heard of Inside Stories until the focus group and thought that finding a way to increase the number of people who were aware of it was important. This clearly showed that the participants thought the stories were valuable. One man from Group 2 summed up these feelings when he said that he did not have any specific suggestions, but that "any opportunity to share it should be taken."

### *5.2.5 Unanticipated Results: Personal Experiences*

I did not anticipate the fact that I would experience the effects of the focus groups and group facilitation. After the first focus group, a number of participants expressed their appreciation and interest in the project. Even though I did not facilitate the activities from the guide, I still essentially facilitated the focus group questions. From this experience, I developed a stronger connection to the participants in this group than I had before. Passing in the hallways we now might stop and say hello and have a brief conversation rather than simply passing by with a smile or a nod.

After the second focus group, in which I facilitated activities and storytelling in addition to the focus group questions, two of the participants stopped by my office to chat about life. They now stop by regularly, and one has started to send emails that might be of interest to my work and studies. One email in particular was a brief story this person had written about how he had come to Canada. One woman said that she had often seen me around the neighbourhood house but had never known who I was, and that she appreciated the session. This has demonstrated the ability of discussion and story sharing to foster new or deeper connections between people.

## 6.0 DISCUSSION

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One of the initial questions this project aimed to answer was: what is the impact of Inside Stories? In both focus groups, it is clear that the stories affected the viewers based on their responses to the questions. The literature review cited potential impacts of storytelling and digital storytelling, such as providing insight and inspiration, and creating bonds and social connections. Other literature looked at digital storytelling as a way to incite action from its viewers. The findings from the focus groups align with much of the literature about the potential impact of storytelling. For example, many of the responses to the question about the purpose of Inside Stories involved some form of inspiration. Participants also believed it was created to encourage people to take action, as with the example of the public health stories in the literature review. Furthermore, the two questions that asked about what actions viewers would be willing to take received positive responses. Overall, participants were inspired to take a number of actions to contribute to what they thought would make a welcoming community suggesting that Inside Stories can have the impact that it was intended to have.

The re-telling of stories was cited as one way to evaluate the impact of a digital story (Little & Froggett, 2009). This method was used in an adapted form in which focus group participants were asked what surprised them about the stories. This proved to be a valuable question and many of the participants re-told a particular part of a story, demonstrating some of the stories that had more impact on them. No particular story stood out as being told most, indicating that one story is not more effective than another but that it depends on the viewers' life experiences. Having multiple stories increases the possibility that a viewer will be impacted by a story.

The second research question asked how facilitated activities could potentially increase the impact of Inside Stories on intercultural understanding and social capital development. The results were less pronounced than anticipated, which means that Inside Stories has a positive impact on the above issues even with those who are simply viewing the stories online. These viewers may, in fact, be more likely to take something away because they are not attending a group. Those who view the stories in groups likely have less social isolation already. Nonetheless, those in the facilitated activities demonstrated more likelihood in choosing responses that contributed towards social capital and welcoming communities, such as trusting a neighbour and inviting someone from a different culture over to one's house. These findings suggest that facilitators can target their activities towards the intended results or change desired. These results also support the literature discussing the relevance of dialogue in interculturalism as well as the literature that discusses the role of storytelling in developing personal connections. Bridger & Alter's believed that relationships are the most important way one can build social capital, and Inside Stories seems to be an ideal opportunity for groups to be face-to-face rather than just using online networks.

These findings are also interesting to think about in the context of individual versus community level social capital. While the facilitated activities and discussions are at the individual level, they may even have an impact at the community level. While assessing

this impact is outside of the scope of this project, Putnam suggests that a community high in social capital will mean that individuals will also have high social capital whether they participate in these activities or not. A question to ask is: does it go the other way? How many individuals in the community need high social capital for a community to be considered to have high social capital?

Inside Stories aims to create more welcoming communities by showing examples where neighbours have developed social ties in their community, making their lives more enjoyable. Many of them are bridging ties, connecting them to people who are less similar to themselves, such as Erwin forming ties with the Chinese singing group. By providing these examples, Inside Stories encourages others to form similar social ties in their community. Many respondents in the focus groups understood that Inside Stories was trying to do this. Group 2 even understood that the main focus was on neighbours, because Inside Stories was very neighbourhood-based. Furthermore, they also seemed to understand that bridging ties were being emphasized because they often talked about connecting across different cultures. These findings indicate that Inside Stories can influence viewers' awareness of the importance of social ties, and if developing social ties with neighbours is the goal then some directed facilitated activities might be beneficial. One staff commented that she believed Inside Stories would help reduce ethnic enclaves. This was an interesting comment considering the literature about bonding and bridging ties and whether or not they contribute to ethnic enclaves. The ties most likely formed through Inside Stories activities would be bridging, thus her comment supports the literature that bridging ties help to avoid ethnic enclaves.

The final question looked at the sustainability of Inside Stories and how it can continue to be used. Suggestions were given by staff interviewees who provided very practical advice on using it in programs and focus group participants who brought a range of ideas based on their own personal experiences. These suggestions were then compared with the literature to determine the best next steps as SVNH and SHNS move forward. The interviews to develop the facilitator's guide found that many preferred an intercultural approach. In the literature review, interculturalism was explained as being a negotiation of a new identity together often involving dialogue. Some of the responses involved dialogue as a way to build bridges between cultures. They also showed a tendency towards interculturalism by avoiding a "one-size-fits-all" approach to integration; instead, they recognized that different cultures have different qualities and that this needs to be taken into consideration when leading activities with a diverse group of people. None of the respondents explicitly described their approach as being assimilationist, multicultural, or intercultural; however, some of the focus group respondents used the word multicultural. They used this word when describing the purpose of Inside Stories. This shows that there are still blurred lines between the definitions of these approaches, and that multicultural remains the dominant way of thinking when bringing different cultures together.

The neighbourhood house was seen as playing an important role in continuing the work of Inside Stories. When asked about next steps for Inside Stories, many of the participants in both focus groups included neighbourhood houses in their answer, whether it was

hosting a viewing of the stories or making a field trip to another neighbourhood house to meet people living in a different community. The example of the Hindu and Sikh women who became friends as a result of their dialogue through a neighbourhood house activity also demonstrates the role of neighbourhood houses in forming social ties, as discussed in the literature review. While the literature review found that a physical space in the community that provided face-to-face time was the best way to form new social connections, some literature also saw a place for communication via web technology. Focus group participants similarly saw the use of technology as being complementary to in-person activities.

Both reasons for using storytelling in community development are applicable to the Inside Stories research project. Inside Stories' purpose was to connect into the soul of the community and encourage connections between residents. Furthermore, the research project aims to find ways to use the stories to engage in dialogue. The literature emphasized the importance of the process of digital storytelling, including the skills learned in technology, the relationships formed with the facilitator and other participants, and the therapeutic power of exploring and telling one's own story. However, this project did not involve a process component that allowed storytellers to create their own story; instead, they were interviewed by experts. It is worth considering a "Part 2" in which residents are invited to digital storytelling workshops to contribute more stories into the park on the Inside Stories website.

Inside Stories shared many outcomes similar to those associated with digital stories as identified in the literature review. The positive effects of Inside Stories on the participants highlights the need to continue using Inside Stories and to find ways to ensure that it can continue to be used. The following section provides recommendations for SVNH and SHNS to ensure that Inside Stories continues to have a positive impact on the way people view intercultural relationships and forming new social ties in the community.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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The findings above demonstrate that Inside Stories does have the desired impact on intercultural understanding and social capital. However, building each of these things does not happen after one viewing of Inside Stories. While it may leave a positive impact on a viewer about these issues, the process is much lengthier and Inside Stories can only play one piece. The following recommendations provide suggestions on how Inside Stories can better play that catalyst role in encouraging viewers to think about these issues, and on how to leverage Inside Stories to be part of a more involved process of building welcoming communities.

### 7.1 Short-term Recommendations

Because of the realities of funding and the priorities that SVNH must place on ensuring funding its existing services, the short-term or more immediate recommendations are easy to implement and can potentially be embedded into already existing services, in particular the Settlement services.

1. **Facilitation Resources**  
The first task should be to share the stories and a pdf version of the Facilitator's Guide with SVNH staff and SHNS volunteers so that they are aware of the resource available to them. This could be done at a staff meeting or at team meetings. Because there was such positive response in the focus groups and the outcomes of facilitated activities were even better, staff should be informed of the potential outcomes. Staff who have already used the Facilitator's Guide could also share their own experiences with other staff. The Facilitator's Guide should also be shared beyond the SVNH and SHNS network, such as with other neighbourhood houses, settlement organizations, and local service providers.
2. **Community Events**  
The focus group participants had many responses in which people had the opportunity to view the stories together and then discuss afterwards. While it can be difficult to find the staff and monetary resources to hold new events, it would be feasible to include Inside Stories in existing events. For instance, SVNH's annual Thanksgiving dinner could include the viewing of a story and an opportunity to discuss a few of the suggested questions from the Facilitator's Guide afterwards. Perhaps additional questions could be generated around the theme of "giving thanks." In order to be able to share the stories with ease at all kinds of events, having a version that is on DVD available to rent from the front desk at SVNH would be helpful.
3. **Maintain Web Presence**  
The finding that Inside Stories tends to have a positive impact overall with or without facilitation should encourage SVNH and SHNS to ensure that Inside Stories continues to have a web presence. Focus group participants felt that it was a good resource to share online for newcomers who have not yet arrived in

Canada. As part of Settlement services, organizations can apply for funding to provide overseas orientations. While this is not a role that SVNH plays because it is more locally-based, it would be worth sharing the stories and the Facilitator's Guide with organizations that do offer overseas orientations. Additionally, featuring one of the stories each month on SVNH's website or Facebook page would be another simple way to continue online presence and potentially bring more people to the website.

## **7.2 Intermediate-term Recommendation**

This recommendation is not as extensive as the following section's recommendations, however it is labour-intensive. Supervising interns requires preparation before they start to recruit the right person, during the internship to provide adequate support, and after to ensure that their work continues. Nonetheless, this would be feasible to complete in the next year if a staff person was interested in supervising an intern.

1. **Recruit a Social Media Intern**  
Each year UBC asks for internship hosts for students in the Faculty of Arts in which they volunteer up to eight hours per week with an organization in exchange for gaining experience in the workplace. A social media intern could potentially find ways to generate more submissions to the park on Inside Stories.

## **7.3 Long-term Recommendations**

These recommendations look at the concept of digital storytelling and even simply storytelling itself on a broader scale, and not just at SVNH. If SVNH decides to implement these recommendations, it will require a longer amount of time and possibly funding for the second recommendation.

1. **Build Storytelling into Programs & Services**  
Just as community development has been built into the way many of SVNH's programs and services are offered, storytelling could also be built into program or service delivery. Based on the literature that explains the powerful effects of storytelling and the positive responses from the focus groups, storytelling is a valuable way to approach community development work. First, it would be important to ensure that all staff were comfortable with storytelling. A number of facilitators exist in Vancouver that could provide a workshop to staff. Once staff felt comfortable with storytelling, it could be used in programs on a regular basis.
2. **Develop a Storytelling Network within Neighbourhood Houses**  
Other neighbourhood houses have also been involved in storytelling projects, whether they were digital or otherwise. As mentioned above, stories can be a part of the programs and services, and they can also be an effective way to communicate with stakeholders including funders, partners, and residents. Stories could also be used as a way to raise neighbourhood house profiles and to demonstrate they play a key role in the community as social anchors that

help to build social networks. A group of people from each neighbourhood house involved in storytelling could form a Storytelling Task Group, providing support to each other and even applying for funding to work on projects together. Resources such as laptops, recording equipment, or tools like the Facilitator's Guide could be shared, and training could be done for the group at the same time.

While these recommendations are mainly focused at a regional level, it is also possible to share the Facilitator's Guide more widely or to join bigger storytelling networks such as the Center for Digital Storytelling in the US. However, if sharing Inside Stories and the facilitator's guide internationally, it is important to consider the following quote:

Canada simply does not face many of the challenges confronting other immigrant countries. Because of its geographical location there is virtually no illegal immigration and hence no fear of losing control over the border. Because of its points systems for selecting immigrants, immigrants to Canada tend to be more educated and skilled than immigrants to other countries and so are not perceived as an economic burden. And because of its historic French-English divide, immigrants to Canada are often seen as helping to unify the country and, indeed, are more committed to maintaining the country intact than the fractious historical founding nations (that is the Aboriginals, British, and French) (Kymlicka, 2010). Canada's demographics and immigration history are unique, and Vancouver even more so with its extensive cultural diversity. Therefore it is an important factor to consider when sharing Inside Stories with other countries. If used in a sensitive and educational way, however, it could be a way to open up dialogue between countries about the differences in migration and aboriginal history and current day realities.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

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The interviews, focus groups, and literature have discussed the many factors involved in building welcoming communities. Multiple approaches exist and it is challenging to assess which approach is best when it is such a complex issue. Different locations will require different approaches, based on demographics or even whether it is urban or rural. The history of a location also affects the approach taken, as does the type of funding and already existing services to bridge the differences between cultures. Using a traditional technique such as storytelling with new technology, making it digital storytelling, has proven to be one way to help work towards building welcoming communities in Vancouver, BC. Inside Stories had a positive impact regarding intercultural relationships and new social connections on those involved in the focus groups and has potential to continue to have impact if SVNH and SHNS decide to move forward with some of the recommendations.

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## 10.0 APPENDICES

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### 10.1 Recruitment Materials

#### Email sent by SVNH Office Manager to staff:

*“We are working with Jessica Moerman, our staff and also a graduate student at the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, to conduct research on our digital stories project: Inside Stories. She will be conducting two separate focus groups as well as staff interviews to identify how digital stories can be used in community development work and how a facilitator’s guidebook can enhance the viewing of these stories in groups.*

*We are looking for 3-5 staff or facilitators who run programs or work with groups that might use Inside Stories in the future. Staff will need to be willing to read the facilitator’s guide, which will be distributed to those who are interested, and be able to meet with Jessica for an interview about the guidebook. Interviews will be arranged during working hours for your convenience and have been preapproved by your supervisor.*

*If you are interested in participating, please email Jessica directly ([jessica@southvan.org](mailto:jessica@southvan.org)) by **Mon Jul 15** to arrange an interview time and to obtain a copy of the draft facilitator’s guide. Please also review the attached consent form, sign, and return it directly to Jessica at your interview.*

*Please note that you are not obligated to participate and that neither your employment nor your relationship with Jessica will be affected in any way whether you choose to participate or not.*

*Jessica is available to answer any questions you may have about the project.”*

**Email sent by SVNH Program delivery staff and SHNS Community Organizer to participants and/or shared in person at group meetings:**

*“South Vancouver Neighbourhood House is working with Jessica Moerman, SVNH staff and graduate student at the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, to conduct research on our digital stories project: Inside Stories. She will be conducting two separate focus groups as well as staff interviews to identify how digital stories can be used in community development work and how a facilitator’s guidebook can enhance the viewing of these stories in groups.*

*We are looking for 12-16 community members who are interested in participating in either of the focus groups (6-8 people per session). They will be held at SVNH (6470 Victoria Drive) on the following dates:*

- 1) Friday, July 26, 3:00-5:00pm*
- 2) Monday, July 29, 4:00-7:00pm*

*(Light snacks and refreshments will be served)*

*Participants will preferably live in the South Vancouver area and will not be overly familiar with the Inside Stories project.*

*If you are interested in participating in one of these groups, please sign up at the SVNH front desk by phone ([604-324-6212](tel:604-324-6212)) or in person. You will need to provide your name only. Please review the [attached] consent form, sign, and bring it to the focus group.*

*Please note that participation is voluntary and whether you choose to participate or not will not affect any of the services, programs, or opportunities that you access through SVNH.*

*If you have any questions about the project, Jessica is available and can be reached at [604-324-6212](tel:604-324-6212) or [jessica@southvan.org](mailto:jessica@southvan.org)”*

**Poster displayed at SVNH reception and distributed in group meetings:**

Curious about new media and **digital storytelling**?  
Not sure what digital storytelling is but want to learn more?  
Want to meet your **neighbours** and  
know more about who lives in your **community**?  
Interested in **contributing** to research?

**If so, come join a focus group about digital stories!**

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and the South Hill Neighbours Society created a website with digital stories told by local residents.

We want **your help** in finding a way to use this website in our programs!

Choose **one** of the following times to participate in a focus group located at SVNH (6470 Victoria Drive) and led by a University of Victoria, School of Public Administration graduate student:

**Friday, July 26, 3:00-5:00pm**  
**Monday, July 29, 4:00-7:00pm**

If interested, please sign up with the Front Desk  
or call 604-324-6212.

Please read the consent form for more information.

## 10.2 Consent Forms

### *Group 1 Participant Consent Form*

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#### **Project Title: Inside Stories: Using Existing Digital Stories to Build Inclusive Communities**

**Researcher(s):** Jessica Moerman, Graduate Student, Department of Public Administration, University of Victoria, 604-324-6212 or [jmoerman@uvic.ca](mailto:jmoerman@uvic.ca)

**Supervisor:** Dr. Lynne Siemens, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, 250-721-8069, [siemensl@uvic.ca](mailto:siemensl@uvic.ca)

#### **Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:**

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH) and South Hill Neighbours Society (SHNS) created a website called Inside Stories, featuring a series of digital stories about local residents' relationship to the South Hill (Fraser St.) community. This project aims to explore the effectiveness and potential of using group facilitation processes with digital stories in community development work in South Hill and beyond.

#### **This Research is Important because:**

Tools or websites are often created as part of community organization projects; however, once funding for a particular project is finished, these tools tend to go unnoticed or underused. This project seeks to create a facilitator's guidebook that will be accessible on the web so that people can continue to use the stories from Inside Stories to address community issues.

#### **Participation:**

- A. You are being asked to participate in this study because you were identified by staff or facilitators of South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and/or the South Hill Neighbours Society and are a resident of the South Vancouver community who is **not** familiar with the Inside Stories website.
- B. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
- C. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on the services, programs, or opportunities that you access at SVNH or how you will be treated.

#### **Procedures:**

- A focus group with 6-8 participants will be held. During the focus group, participants will be shown some digital stories that were told by local residents. Participants will then be asked to discuss a series of questions about their reactions to the stories. The focus group will be audio recorded. Duration: 2 hours Location: South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

#### **Benefits:**

- Participants of the focus groups may benefit from meeting others in their neighbourhood and making new connections
- Participants will also learn more about digital stories and the South Vancouver community

#### **Risks:**



**Project Title: Inside Stories: Using Existing Digital Stories to Build Inclusive Communities**

**Researcher(s):** Jessica Moerman, Graduate Student, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, 604-324-6212 or [jmoerman@uvic.ca](mailto:jmoerman@uvic.ca)

**Supervisor:** Dr. Lynne Siemens, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, 250-721-8069, [siemensl@uvic.ca](mailto:siemensl@uvic.ca)

**Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:**

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH) and South Hill Neighbours Society (SHNS) created a website called Inside Stories, featuring a series of digital stories about local residents' relationship to the South Hill (Fraser St.) community. This project aims to explore the effectiveness and potential of using group facilitation processes with digital stories in community development work in South Hill and beyond.

**This Research is Important because:**

Tools or websites are often created as part of community organization projects; however, once funding for a particular project is finished, these tools tend to go unnoticed or underused. This project seeks to create a facilitator's guidebook that will be accessible on the web so that people can continue to use the stories from Inside Stories to address community issues.

**Participation:**

- D. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a staff or facilitator working with the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and/or the South Hill Neighbours Society who works with groups in which you might use Inside Stories as a tool.
- E. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
- F. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your employment or how you will be treated.

**Procedures:**

- A facilitator's guidebook will be distributed to you and you are asked to read it and make any notes or observations that you may have. The investigator will arrange a time to interview you about your impressions of the guidebook and will ask for suggestions on how to improve it. The interview will be audio recorded.
- A. Duration: 2 hours (including reading the guidebook and the interview)
  - Location: South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

**Benefits:**

- Program delivery staff and facilitators may benefit from having a guidebook to facilitate Inside Stories in their existing programs
- Program delivery staff and facilitators will become familiar with a digital story web resource

**Risks:**



## 10.3 Story Summaries

### SOUTH HILL COMMUNITY – INSIDE STORIES

The following is a brief summary of each of the nine digital stories that are featured on the South Hill Community's Inside Stories website. During the focus group, we may show some or all of these stories. If you feel that any of these stories might be a personal trigger for you, you may decide not to participate. If you would like to discuss further with Jessica, please contact her at 604-324-6212 or [jessica@southvan.org](mailto:jessica@southvan.org).

#### **Stephen**

Stephen works at a store in the South Hill community and discusses how before helping to start the South Hill Business Association, he mainly had friends in the Chinese community. The Association allowed him to interact with people outside of his own culture.

#### **Claudia**

Claudia and her family immigrated to Canada. She finds it exhausting to speak English all day. It is challenging because her children now prefer to speak English over Spanish. She discusses how cultural cues are like another language that she needs to learn. She feels lost and tired with the experience of immigration.

#### **Hardeep**

Hardeep immigrated to Canada from India when he was in high school. He was bullied a lot by Canadian-born Indian students for having an accent and the way he dressed. He discusses specific bullying incidents and the struggle of getting support from his mother because of her own depression from immigrating to Canada.

#### **Cheryl**

Cheryl is one of few native people to live in the South Hill community, but she feels like fits in well with the multicultural neighbourhood. She discusses both racism and acceptance in the same community. She is being forced to move from her home because her landlord sold the house.

#### **Ben**

Ben is a tailor who has a shop on Fraser Street. He was born in China the year the Japanese invaded and lived the first few years of his life among fighting and starvation. He moved to Hong Kong after communism came to China, then later moved to Canada. He is happy in Vancouver and enjoys his job.

**Erwin**

Erwin came to Canada from Germany after being released from a POW camp in World War II. His children experienced some prejudice when they first arrived. He visits the YMCA frequently to swim, and discovered a Chinese gospel singing group. He enjoys singing with them and finds that Asian cultures tend to have more respect for older people. He misses his deceased wife and plans to be buried next to her.

**Jinder**

Jinder's father left India for Canada when she was a baby. She, her brother, and mother joined him when she was 8 years old. She discusses the effect of his drinking on the family. He introduced her to the library, and she discusses the importance of books in her life when family was not able to provide her what she needed. Many times she notes the feeling of living in two worlds/cultures.

**Nasrin**

Nasrin describes the situation in Afghanistan (shooting at night, etc.) that caused she and her family to make the move to Canada. She was initially depressed when she arrived, but decided to become more independent and found a career as a hairdresser that she loves. She instilled this independence in her daughter too, who is now a popular professional Afghani singer. She talks about the backlash from her community from trying to raise a strong and independent daughter.

**Sherry**

After retiring, Sherry decided to focus on her passion for languages. She and a few neighbours get together over tea to teach each other their language. She is teaching English, and another neighbor is teaching Mandarin. She discusses some of the challenges of different sounds in each language.

## 10.4 Interview & Focus Group Questions

### Interview Questions for Staff/Facilitators

- Are you familiar with Inside Stories?
- Have you used the stories in any of your programs before? If so, how?
- What parts of the guide do you think will be especially effective in creating more welcoming communities?
- Can you suggest any changes to the guide that would help to increase its effectiveness?
- How do you see yourself using this guide in your programs?
- How would you like this guide to be shared so that you can use it in your programs? (i.e. electronically, in a presentation, a paper copy, etc.)
- Do you have anything else to add?

### Focus Group Questions

- What do think was the purpose of Inside Stories?
- What is one thing that you as an individual could do (and would be willing to do) to create a more welcoming community?
- What is one thing that surprised you in the stories?
- How could SVNH, SHNS, and other community organizations or groups use Inside Stories to create more welcoming communities and increase the connections between neighbours?
- Dotmocracy on flip chart: “After viewing the stories, are you more, the same, or less likely to do the following things...”
  - trust people in your neighbourhood
  - talk to a neighbor
  - invite a neighbor over
  - do a favour for your neighbor (i.e. water plants while away, take in garbage can)
  - invite someone over who is of a different culture

- visit a local library, community centre, neighbourhood house
- vote in a municipal election
- sign a petition
- attend a cultural event (that is different from your own culture)
- attend a religious service
- attend a community meeting
- attend a political rally
- attend a club or group
- attend a city council/school board meeting
- participate in a community project
- volunteer

## 10.5 Facilitator's Guide

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The Inside Stories Facilitator's Guide is to be used with the Inside Stories website, where visitors can watch nine different stories about the struggles and successes of belonging in a local Vancouver neighbourhood. Staff or volunteer facilitators who work with communities can view any of the stories and engage in discussions based on the questions in this guide or lead activities from this guide that address the theme of creating welcoming communities.

To view the stories, go to: [www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories](http://www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories)

### Who should use this guide?

This guide can be used by anyone who is comfortable facilitating discussion or activities in a small to medium sized group. It will be most useful for facilitators who are interested in building more inclusive communities and developing understanding between people of different cultures.

### What is Inside Stories?

Inside Stories is an interactive website featuring a row of houses or shops from the South Hill neighbourhood. When you click on a house or shop, a person's story pops up that describes things such as learning a new language, moving to a new country, bullying, intercultural friendships, and more.

### Where is South Hill?

South Hill is located in the South part of Vancouver, BC, Canada along Fraser Street between 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and the Fraser River. The area is on Musqueam land, descendants of the Coast Salish people. The first major group of settlers came from Western Europe as well as South and East Asia. In 1929, the area amalgamated with the City of Vancouver. After the Second World War, the area saw housing and community facility growth. Eventually South Hill became less agricultural and more urbanized. Today the population is very culturally diverse, which is reflected in the shops along Fraser Street.

### Why should I be interested in fostering welcoming communities?

Cities around the world are becoming increasingly diverse, with immigration providing much of the population growth in countries like Canada. The Vancouver Foundation completed a study in 2012 that found the residents of Vancouver are increasingly disconnected. Links have been shown between higher levels of positive social connections and mental and physical health.

### How can I use this guide?

- 1) Read through the guide and view the stories on the website ([www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories](http://www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories)). Decide on which stories you want to show and which discussion questions or activities you want to lead. Make adjustments based on your group.
- 2) Set up equipment in order to view the stories (laptop, projector, speakers, internet access)
- 3) Lead some icebreakers with the group to set the tone
- 4) Create a group agreement if the group is new or does not have one
- 5) Show the stories: [www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories](http://www.southhillcommunity.ca/insidestories)
- 6) Lead your selected discussion questions or activities
- 7) Finish with a closing activity to wrap up the session

Please make adjustments to the activities based on your knowledge of the group. Some groups may have limited literacy or language levels. Activities can be modified to include avoid written components. Be aware of cultural norms as well. For instance, in some cultures women may not feel comfortable sharing if men are part of the group. Consider having women's or men's only groups if this is the case.

### A note about facilitation:

Facilitating can be a lot of fun and it can also be challenging. Some of the topics in the stories or activities may trigger a participant emotionally. Be prepared and ensure that you have a plan in place on what to do if this happens. If you are not comfortable with conflict or strong emotions, you should consider avoiding leading certain activities until you have the training and experience that makes you feel confident enough to do so. This guide is not meant to teach people how to facilitate. Many facilitation resources are available. In Vancouver, we recommend PeerNet BC or Starhawk's Empowerment Manual as a good introduction to facilitation.

### SYMBOLS



Advanced facilitation skills are required



Appropriate for low levels of literacy (no or minor modifications)

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## 1. NAME GAMES

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### 1.1 MY NAME IS



\* From Humaira Imtiaz, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

**Purpose:** Provides a simple way to get to know other's names in a way that is accessible for multiple language and literacy levels.

- Start off by introducing yourself and something that you like: *My name is Anna and I like ice cream*
- The next person must then do the same thing but also repeat what you said: *My name is Victor and I like books; this is Anna and she likes ice cream*
- The next person does the same thing and must introduce both John and Anna
- This continues until everyone has had a turn. The person who is last will have to introduce the entire group
- Participants can help each other out so that it becomes more of a group activity

### 1.2 STORY OF MY NAME



\* Adapted from SPARC BC (2010). Project diversity: What is a welcoming & inclusive community?: Facilitator's handbook. Available at [www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity](http://www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity)

**Purpose:** Icebreaker and introductory activity which allows participants to get to know each other by sharing some of their personal history and culture

- **This activity is best done in a circle. Allow approx. 2 min per person**
- Ask participants to take turns in the circle sharing something about their name. Participants can share things like:
  - The meaning of different parts of their name
  - How their name was chose
  - Anything else they consider significant about their name
- You can also add other introductory information, such as what they hope to get out of the workshop. Consider limiting the number of things being asked to 1-2 pieces of information.

## 2. ICEBREAKERS

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### 2.1 TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

\* Adapted from SPARC BC (2010). Project diversity: What is a welcoming & inclusive community?: Facilitator's handbook. Available at [www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity](http://www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity)

**Purpose:** Icebreaker and introductory activity that allows participants to get to know each other. Can be used to highlight visible / hidden aspects of identity.

- **Allow at least 20 min. for a bigger group. Gather paper, pens and a container ahead of time if doing this activity with adequate literacy levels.**
- Ask participants to write down or simply think of 2 things that are true about themselves, and 1 thing that is a lie. For example: *I grew up on a sailboat, I speak 3 languages, and I have traveled to Japan.*
- **Simple, shorter version:** Participants take turns introducing themselves in a circle and sharing their two truths and a lie. The rest of the group must then guess which are the truths and which is the lie.
- **Longer version:** Have participants put the piece of paper with their truths and lie into a container. Take turns drawing a piece of paper so that everyone has somebody else's two truths and a lie. Ask participants to mingle around the room, introduce themselves, and ask questions to figure out whose piece of paper they drew. For example, if Luis has a paper that says *My favourite colour is purple, I speak Spanish, and I like cabbage* he might say something like: *Hi Luis, I'm Stacy... Is your favourite colour purple?* Once everyone has found out which person their paper belongs to, reconvene the group. Have the person with the paper introduce the person to whom the paper belongs. The group then guesses which are the truths and which is a lie, similar to the first version of this activity.

## 2.2 DIVERSITY BINGO

\* Adapted from SPARC BC (2010). Project diversity: What is a welcoming & inclusive community?: Facilitator's handbook. Available at [www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity](http://www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity)

**Purpose:** Allow participants to get to know each other, highlighting commonalities and diversity with the group. This activity can also be used to demonstrate how we all have multiple identities or to initiate a discussion on stereotyping.

- **Gather pens/pencils and enough copies of the *Diversity Bingo* sheet in Appendix A. Make sure there is enough room to walk around to meet other participants. Prizes optional.**
- Hand out the *Diversity Bingo* sheets and allow participants 5 min to mingle while trying to find someone for whom the statement in each of the squares is true. If the person has this experience, participants have them sign their name in the box. Generally, do not allow people to put one person's name in more than 1-2 boxes. You can offer a prize for the first person to complete one straight line (Bingo!) and then another for the first person to complete all of the squares (Blackout!).
- After the activity, debrief about what participants learned about themselves and others. Which squares were easy to fill? Which ones more difficult?

## 2.3 MOVE INTO THE CENTRE

\* Adapted from Susan Faehndrich-Finlay, who retrieved it from Leadership and Developing Diversity: Available at [www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/diverse/html](http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/diverse/html)

**Purpose:** To create a supportive environment in which learners can disclose their group memberships and allow them to experience what it is like to be part of a minority group

- Ask participants to form a large circle. Explain that participants should move into the centre if they belong to groups that are called out. They should stay where they are if they do not belong.
- Begin calling out low-risk groups (e.g. brown hair, large family, etc.) and work up to groups that are typically discriminated against or under represented (e.g. Aboriginal, gay, person with disabilities).
- Applaud as each group forms in the middle. As each group forms in the centre, ask them what they think is the most positive thing about being a member of this group. Move back to the circle formation after each group has been called out.
- After the activity, possible discussion questions include:
  - How did it feel to be in the center of the circle? (Were you comfortable being stared at?)
  - How did it feel to be on the outside of the circle?
  - How did you feel about those with you in the center of the circle or about those in the outer circle?
  - Did anyone not make any trip into the circle? How did that feel?

### **Potential group memberships to call out:**

People who....

- Know how to swim
- Have brown eyes
- Were born in the 1950's
- Speak 3 or more languages
- Ate rice yesterday
- Are married
- Like riding bikes
- Took the bus today
- Sent to bed before 10pm last night
- Were born outside Canada
- Speak Chinese
- Watched any of the Olympics
- Have grandchildren
- Live within 10 blocks of here
- Have a driver's license
- Have an iPhone
- Like to volunteer

## 2.4 WEB OF CONNECTIONS

\* Adapted from Susan Faehndrich-Finlay, who retrieved it from [icebreakerideas.wordpress.com/2011/03/09/ice-breaker-connections](http://icebreakerideas.wordpress.com/2011/03/09/ice-breaker-connections)

**Purpose:** To see what group members have in common with each other and to learn more about each other as participants

- **Gather a ball of yarn or string and ask participants to form a circle.**
- Start with yourself, by stating your name and start to talk about yourself (e.g. *I am an only child, I drive to work, I grew up in Canada, I have traveled to, etc.*). If someone hears something they have in common with you, they should shout out “CONNECT!” as soon as they hear it. Holding on to the ball of string, toss the ball to them. They introduce themselves and share information about themselves until someone else can connect with them.
- Continue until everyone has had a turn and a big web has formed. End by explaining that we all have things in common with other people but that they are often hidden, and sometimes it takes time to find those things.

## 2.5 HELLO IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES



\* Adapted from SPARC BC (2010). Project diversity: What is a welcoming & inclusive community?: Facilitator’s handbook. Available at [www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity](http://www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity)

**Purpose:** A fun warm-up / energy booster that can heighten awareness about diversity, and celebrate cross-cultural knowledge exchange.

- **If you want a list on hand, visit:**
  - [www.wikihow.com/Say-Hello-in-Different-Languages](http://www.wikihow.com/Say-Hello-in-Different-Languages)
- **Option 1:** Challenge the group to come up with as many different languages to say hello as possible. When someone volunteers (e.g., Bonjour!), make sure they say it or repeat it clearly for the rest of the group who then repeat.
- **Option 2:** Break into small table groups and have a friendly competition amongst groups. Give them 5 minutes and see who comes up with the most ways to say hello. Have winners read them aloud

### 3. GROUP AGREEMENT

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**If the group is new, it is important that participants agree on acceptable behavior for how the group will function.**

\* From SPARC BC (2010). Project diversity: What is a welcoming & inclusive community?: Facilitator's handbook. Available at [www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity](http://www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity)

**Time:** 5-20 Minutes (depending on whether the facilitator presents ideas or solicits from the group)

**Materials:** Flipchart & markers

**Instructions:** Explain to participants that Group Agreements (also called Norms or Ground rules) can help the group stay focused on its objectives by establishing clear expectations of how they will interact and behave together. Using a flip chart, present a list of norms you suggest. You can choose from some of the following common group agreements or create your own:

- Everyone has the right to pass
- Only one person should speak at a time
- Keep an open mind, open ears and open heart
- Speak to be understood, listen to understand
- Ask questions
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Challenge ideas, not people
- Share responsibility for making the session work
- Share the airtime
- Maintain confidentiality & use discretion
- Avoid side talking

Ask if everyone feels comfortable with this list, or if anyone has any concerns. Ask if there are any agreements the group would like to see added. Add these to the list / modify as needed.

**Options:** If you have more time, you can also invite participants to generate their own list of group agreement

## 4. STORIES & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### 4.1 STEPHEN'S STORY (0:51)

**Summary:** Stephen works at a store in the South Hill community and discusses how before helping to start the South Hill Business Association, he mainly had friends in the Chinese community. The Association allowed him to interact with people outside of his own culture.

*“Before, most of my friends were Chinese who speak Cantonese. It’s not intentional, it’s just a convenient habit.”*

- What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of making most of your friendships with people who share your ethnic background and language?

*“Then we started the South Hill Business Improvement Association and it helped me to make more friends outside of the Chinese community.”*

- What have you got involved in that is helping you to make friendships in other ethnic groups? OR what could help you to make new friends outside your own ethnic group?

## 4.2 CLAUDIA'S STORY (1:45)

**Summary:** Claudia and her family immigrated to Canada. She finds it exhausting to speak English all day. It is challenging because her children now prefer to speak English over Spanish. She discusses how cultural cues are like another language that she needs to learn. She feels lost and tired with the experience of immigration.

*“Some days I feel so tired of speaking English, I tell my, kids I don’t want to hear a word of English anymore today, which is impossible because they like speaking English among themselves.”*

- How do you feel about raising your kids in a language that isn’t your mother tongue? Do you think that will bring challenges or benefits?

*“When you know someone, you never know how they are really inside. People smile, but I find it so difficult to really get the true person. When you have the cultural background you are able to do it, right? Even with movements – the way people speak, the way people look at you, whatever...but when you are transported to another culture you lose that ability. Then you are lost.”*

- Do you have friends from a different cultural background? Do you feel that you are getting to know “the true person”? What helps or makes it more difficult?

*“I think immigrating is like living a different life in a different person’s skin. It’s completely different. You have to switch all you’ve learnt to something different. There is no choice, you have to adapt. Sometimes it’s so tiring.”*

- Do you agree with Claudia’s view that “immigrating is like living in a different person’s skin? Does this change over time? If so, how?

### 4.3 HARDEEP'S STORY (3:15)

**Summary:** Hardeep immigrated to Canada from India when he was in high school. He was bullied a lot by Canadian-born Indian students for having an accent and the way he dressed. He discusses specific bullying incidents and the struggle of getting support from his mother because of her own depression.

*“The majority of kids who were bullying me were the Indian kids. They made it harder for me. I had no friends here. I’m an introvert. I tried to talk, but my accent, the way I spoke English was too polite, too nice according to them. I was not wearing Puma or Nike hoodies. I was not wearing Nike shoes. So they would definitely pick on me, because they know this is not how you do it in Canada.”*

- Did you find it surprising that Hardeep’s experience of discrimination came at the hands of people who shared his ethnic background? Do you know of other such situations? Have you ever felt bullied or treated badly because of your differences?

*“When you are different from everyone, no one likes you, you start feeling degraded – like you’re good for nothing. So at that time you really need moral support from either your [aren’t or whatever. In my case, my mom was already so much depressed. Coming back to Canada, she used to cry a lot. I couldn’t tell her anything, what was going on with me.”*

- If Hardeep told you this, would you advise him to share his difficult experience with his mom or not? How could they both get the support they need?

#### 4.4 CHERYL'S STORY (1:30 min)

**Summary:** Cheryl is one of few aboriginal people to live in the South Hill community. She feels like she fits in well with the multicultural neighbourhood. She discusses the existence of both racism and acceptance in the same community. She is being forced to move from her home because her landlord sold the house.

*“When I moved in here I was the only Native person in here, in this community. And then once they got to know me, they thought, oh, she’s just like us, ‘cause a lot of East Indians around here, and especially Vietnamese, and Filipinos, and so there’s a lot of interracial people around here and so I probably just fit in here like everybody else.”*

- Do you know the traditional aboriginal territory of your neighbourhood? If you do, what is it? What do you know about it?

*“I don’t feel any different than anybody else.”*

- Cheryl talks about some of the different cultural groups that make up South Hill. Who are the people that live in your neighbourhood? Do you feel like you fit in?

#### 4.5 BEN'S STORY (2:30)

**Summary:** Ben is a tailor who has a shop on Fraser Street. He was born in China the year the Japanese invaded and lived the first few years of his life among fighting and starvation. He moved to Hong Kong after communism came to China, and then later moved to Canada. He is happy in Vancouver and enjoys his job.

*"I can put food on the table, so I'm happy in Vancouver">*

- How much does that feeling at home depend on finding a job?
- Ben speaks very little English, yet he's run a business here for 20 years. Many of his customers do not speak Chinese. In your point of view, has Ben been successful in integrating into life in Vancouver?
- Ben lived through war, revolution, and hunger before coming to Vancouver. If you were a customer in his tailor shop, would you talk to him any differently after hearing his story?

#### 4.6 ERWIN'S STORY (4:41)

**Summary:** Erwin came to Canada from Germany after the Second World War. His children experienced some prejudice when they first arrived. He visits the YMCA frequently to swim, and discovered a Chinese gospel singing group. He enjoys singing with them and finds that he found many things in common with his new friends.

*"I attend the YMCA at least 4 or 5 times a week. One morning I came in and heard in the distance, there are some gospel sounds – familiar gospel sounds. And so I followed the sound and there was this bunch of Chinese fellows. I didn't understand a word, but I knew the music. And as I came closer they greeted me right away and gave me some music sheets and that was in Chinese as well as in English, so I could join in right away. They were so friendly."*

- Why do you think Erwin and this group of Chinese people at the YMCA were able to become friends?
- Have you been part of a group that was good at welcoming newcomers?
- What other places like the YMCA do you think would be good places to meet people?

*"I came in 1965. The children were the first ones to really adjust to this country. They were out only for a couple of hours and they came back in and they used English words already. And they had good friends in the neighbourhood. One day they came home and they said, 'Dad, who was Hitler?' And I said, 'Why are you asking about Hitler?' 'Yes, the neighbor lady called us in and told us that we are not allowed to play with her children, because Hitler was such a bad person.' I had to give them a lesson in history and also a lesson in good Christian behavior – to love your neighbours and to live in peace with everyone."*

- How do you think Erwin felt when his kids told them what the neighbour said?
- Have you ever felt that someone treated you unfairly because of the country that you came from?
- What do you think about Erwin's response to his kids and the neighbour? How would you have responded? If you practice a religion, what does your religion teach?
- Do you think it is possible for people to live in peace with everyone in Canada? (or your home country?)

*“These Asian people are more open for older people. They have more respect for older people. I just simply enjoy it.”*

- Why does Erwin enjoy the Chinese view of older people?
- How does your culture view older people?
- Do you spend time with people in different generations?
- How do you think that people should show their respect for older people?

#### 4.7 JINDER'S STORY (5:08)

**Summary:** Jinder's father left India for Canada when she was a baby. She, her brother, and mother joined him when she was 8 years old. She discusses the effect of his drinking on the family. He introduced her to the library, and she discusses the importance of books in her life when family was not able to provide her what she needed. Many times she notes the feeling of living in two worlds/cultures.

*"In April 1967 we arrived at the airport in Vancouver and I had never met my father before. He was a complete stranger."*

- Has moving to a new country, meant that you have more or less time with your family members? Have you or has someone that you know experienced being separated from his or her husband, wife, parent, or children? What affect did that have?

*"My parents and my brother and I ended up living in these two separate worlds. My parents went to the temple and met their friends and we grew up with our interests and friends that we met mainly through school."*

- Do you think that the two separate worlds of the kids and their parents were a result of raising kids in a new country or the result of being in two different generations?

*"When people come here who can't speak the language or are just learning the culture, I tell them that human relationships don't always meet our needs but the books do."*

- Jinder found comfort in books. What has helped you to find the support you need?

#### 4.8 NASRIN'S STORY (7:07)

**Summary:** Nasrin describes the situation in Afghanistan (shooting at night, etc.) that caused her and her family to make the move to Canada. She was initially depressed when she arrived, but decided to become more independent and found her dream career as a hairdresser. She instilled this independence in her daughter too, who is now a popular professional Afghani singer. She talks about the backlash from her community from trying to raise a strong and independent daughter.

*"Maybe the rocket is coming. There's gunshots, missiles, anything. We had many, many nights, me 'n' Basheer and the kids. ...We had to put the pillows behind the wall and stay away from the window and be on the floor because there was shooting the whole night. We were getting hopeless. I had no choice but to leave my family behind and take my kids and run. And then, when it's getting peace, I'm going back."*

- How was your journey (or your family's journey) to Canada similar or different from Nasrin's?
- Do you feel like you had to leave your country of origin or you chose to leave your country?
- Nasrin thought that she would eventually go back. Do you think that makes it easier or harder to settle in Canada with that option in mind?

*"It was beautiful to be here; it was a really good service, good hospitality, but I got really depressed. It was very hard. I'm way too far from my family now. I was in the middle of getting confused. What to do? Should I stay here or go back? I was crying, even though I wasn't talking. And then my husband said, 'Where are you going? You don't have your country. You can't go back to your country.' It was a very tough decision. I had to think a little bit more deep and to say, 'Well, ok, I'm staying. I'm not going.'"*

- Some people say there is a honeymoon period when you first live in new country, where everything is interesting and you enjoy learning about differences. Then, after the honeymoon, the struggles begin. How do you think the honeymoon description fits your experience when you came to Canada?
- Nasrin mentions being too far from her extended family. What issues caused you the biggest struggles?
- Do you find yourself, like Nasrin, grappling with the decision to stay in Canada or to go back?

- Nasrin seems to have eventually resolved that question for herself. Do you think that most people resolve this question or leave it open?

*“And from that moment, I made up my mind. Now it’s my turn to get up. To be independent. Get up and do something.”*

- Nasrin’s business seems to be both a place to make money and a social community for her. Nasrin refers to several communities in her life. What are the different communities in your life?
- Do you feel like some are more supportive than others?
- Brainstorm other places where you might develop a community?

*“It was a little bit extreme for my community – Afghans – to raise my daughter to be a strong woman and not to be traditional and conservative. Especially when I sent her to music, I had to hide for at least 2 years when she was taking music lessons. ...The reason I was hiding it – because I was afraid they were going to discourage her. I had to stand up right in front of my daughter to say with a strong attitude – not allow them to discourage my daughter as a young female. People in my community don’t support that.”*

- Nasrin shares how she dealt with having a different view than many people in her own ethnic community. What strategies did she use? Would you have used the same strategies?
- Have you been in a similar situation? How did you manage the conflict?
- Do you encounter pressure to conform? From your ethnic community? From other communities? Share some examples.
- How do you respond in a situation where you feel that you want to live differently than the surrounding community?

#### 4.9 SHERRY'S STORY (1:34)

**Summary:** After retiring, Sherry decided to focus on her passion for languages. She and a few neighbours get together over tea to teach each other their language. She is teaching English, and another neighbor is teaching Mandarin. She discusses some of the challenges of different sounds in each language.

*"We have a lot of fun, we laugh a lot chattering away and laughing at the funny sounds we produce."*

- What has helped you learn English (or another foreign language)? What are the benefits of learning a language in a non-traditional setting like Sherry's weekly neighbourhood tea gathering? Could you imagine teaching your mother tongue to some of your neighbours?

*"I will repeat a word exactly as I think I hear it. But I'm told, 'No, no, do it differently' and eventually, sometimes I get it."*

- In your experience, how long does it take to learn a new language? How long do you have to keep on trying? Is there ever a point where you are finished being a language learner? What has been the most difficult thing about learning English (or another foreign language)? What has been encouraging?

## 5. ACTIVITIES

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### 5.1 A TIME YOU FELT INCLUDED/EXCLUDED



\* Adapted from SPARC BC (2010). Project diversity: What is a welcoming & inclusive community?: Facilitator's handbook. Available at [www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity](http://www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity)

**Purpose:** a starting place to explore the concept of social inclusion. Participants build trust through sharing personal stories. Advanced facilitation skills required.

**Time:** 20-35 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart & markers. Optional - pens, paper, Post-it notes, projector (for PowerPoint presentation)

**Set-up:** Movable chairs so participants can sit next to each other in pairs

**Instructions:** This activity has three parts explained below.

#### Part 1: Reflection (5 minutes)

Invite participants to reflect on a time they felt welcome or included. It can be a childhood experience, or one they had as an adult, a personal experience or a work experience. Note to participants that they should choose an example that they feel comfortable sharing with one other person in the group. If people struggle with identifying an experience, some examples to inspire them include:

- When you didn't know anyone at a party, someone took you around and introduced you to people
- A sign in a shop window said your first language was spoken there
- When eating out with your children, the restaurant had a play area and toys for children
- You arrived at a meeting you were nervous about and saw several people you knew

Once the group has had a few minutes to think about this, invite them to now think of a second experience where they felt excluded, not welcome or different. Again, you can offer the following types of examples:

- Moved to a new city or neighbourhood where the neighbours did not greet you
- Traveled to another country where you felt unwelcomed
- Arrived at a party where you didn't know anyone and everyone else was talking to other people already
- Attended a meeting with people who had more power/seniority/rank than you
- You had a different point of view in a vote or meeting that was not welcomed

### **Part 2: Sharing in pairs (10 minutes)**

Ask participants to work with one other person in the group to share their stories. Each person should take about 3-5 minutes to share while the other person listens. It is important that the person who is listening focuses on being present and understands that their job is simply to listen, not to pass judgment or get caught up in their own emotional reaction to the story. Once the person is done talking, their partner may also ask questions to clarify, or draw out more information about the experience.

### **Part 3: Debriefing / Whole group discussion (10-15 minutes)**

Depending on the amount of time you have for report back / debriefing, you may either invite a few participants to share their experiences, or ask participants to report back what the main qualities of these experiences were. Choose from questions below or ask others you feel are relevant.

- What were the main feelings you experienced
- Are there any commonalities to the experience of inclusion /exclusion across these stories
- Has anyone else experienced something similar
- Inclusion: what were the factors that helped you feel welcome?
- Exclusion: how did you handle it? What helped you? What could have helped? What could someone have done to change the situation?
- Did anything happen to change the experience of exclusion, i.e. did someone else get involved?

It is important to remember that we all have had experiences of feeling included and excluded, and that the emotional aspects of inclusion are just as important as the reality of being included in some type of process, place, or group structure. Discuss the following quote (you can have it on a flipchart, PowerPoint slide, or simply read it to participants):

*A society where everyone belongs creates both the feeling and the reality of belonging and helps each of us reach our full potential. The feeling of belonging comes through caring, cooperation, and trust. We build the feeling of belonging together. The reality of belonging comes through equity and fairness, social and economic justice, and cultural as well as spiritual respect. We make belonging real by ensuring that it is accepted and practiced by society.*

#### **Options:**

Hand out post-it notes and invite participants to write key words that describe their experiences of inclusion / exclusion. Have them post these at the front of the room. You can also do this with the qualities / commonalities that emerged. This can sometimes save a bit of time in the report back.

## 5.2 LABELS GAME

\* From SPARC BC (2010). Project diversity: What is a welcoming & inclusive community?: Facilitator's handbook. Available at [www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity](http://www.sparcbc.ca/project-diversity)

**Purpose:** To help participants understand what stereotyping is and to empathize with people who are affected by stereotyping.

**Time:** 10-20 minutes

**Materials:** Different coloured post-it notes, or sticky labels

**Set-up:** Open space for participants to move around and mingle

**Instructions:** Place different coloured stickers on the participants' foreheads or backs. The sticker may be whatever colours are available, or may have the words of the colour written on them. Participants mingle around the room and must treat people wearing a certain coloured sticker in a certain way. The facilitator can choose what reactions participants should apply (e.g. greet red sticker people as old friends you trust and want to greet warmly; greet blue sticker people as trouble-makers whom you want to avoid, even though they have never harmed you; greet green sticker wearers as someone you quite like, but do not want to bother chatting to.) Participants have to guess the colour of sticker they are wearing, based on the greetings they receive from others.

### **Debriefing:**

- How did it feel to be greeted according to your sticker
- What did it feel like to receive warm greetings
- What did it feel like when people greeted you with distrust and tried to avoid you
- How can you relate this to the experience of stereotyping
- How does stereotyping affect building welcoming communities

Tie this activity in with ideas of stereotyping and discrimination in real life. There are some people we are inclusive towards and some people we exclude, often on insubstantial bases or because we have learned that the way they look or the label they have been given by society means we should treat them in a certain way. There are stereotypes about almost every group of people on earth. Stereotypes are oversimplified and rigid generalizations about a particular group.

### 5.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL CHECKLIST

**Purpose:** To create awareness of social capital and for participants to think about how they can create more in their community

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Materials:** Handouts titled “151 Things I Can Do To Build Social Capital In My Community” (Appendix B); pens/pencils

**Set-up:** Chairs in pairs at a table

**Preamble (5 min):** Explain that social capital is the value of social networks, or the connections between people. The idea is that people within these networks will do things for others in their network without expecting anything in return. For example, social capital is evident when a neighbor watches another neighbour’s home or when a social contact connects someone to an employment opportunity. Social capital has been known to improve a community’s and an individuals overall well-being. This activity will get participants to think about what kinds of things are already happening to create social capital in their community.

#### **Part 1: Pairs Checklist (10)**

Ask participants to get into pairs. Each pair will go through the handout and mark the things that either of them have done (with a check), what they have observed (with a circle), and what they would like to do (with an arrow).

#### **Part 2: Debriefing (5-15)**

Back in the whole group, share some of the results of the checklists. Possible questions include:

- Were there a lot of activities that you had done?
- Did you and your partner have similar answers?
- What are some of the actions you and/or your partner could take in the future?
- Did you and your partner agree on what you would like to do in the future?
- Was there anything on the list that you would add as something you had done, observed, or would like to do?
- Do you think some of the actions were more or less feasible?
- Do you think some of the actions would be more or less effective than others?

**Note:** To adapt this activity for newcomers who have not yet had a chance to do or observe these types of actions in their community, have them think of a community in which you have lived where you felt like you belonged, when answering the questions.

## 5.4 TELLING YOUR STORY

**Purpose:** For participants to have a chance to share their own story and to learn from each other's stories.

**Time:** 15-60 minutes

**Materials:** Recipe cards, pens/pencils, a few choices of objects for the storyteller to hold, tissues

**Set-up:** Enough chairs for everyone to sit in a circle

**Instructions:** Telling one's own story can be a powerful experience for the teller and the listener. It is a common tool used in community development.

### **Part 1: Individual story writing (5 min)**

Provide participants with a large recipe card and distribute pens/pencils. Tell participants they will have approximately 5 minutes to write down their own story. It can be in full sentences or bullet points. It is meant to be something that will help them tell their story to the group. Participants can choose between one of two story prompts or you can write your own:

*Neighbourhoods are shaped by the people who live in them. Has your neighbourhood changed because new people moved in? Or are you someone who has moved to a new place?*

*Some of the people featured on Inside Stories talk about how they came to live in South Hill. Tell us about your how you came to live in your neighbourhood.*

### **Part 2: Story Circle (10-55 min; depends on group size – allow minimum 3 min per person)**

In a circle, people take turns sharing their story. Make sure that everyone has a turn. The storyteller chooses an object to hold while sharing their story. While they are holding the object, everyone else is a listener. As a group, choose a closing word for the storyteller to use once finished. Everyone repeats after storyteller says it to signify having listened. After a story is finished, ask the storyteller if they will accept comments or feedback. Comments should be framed in a positive way; they can talk about what pieces struck an emotional chord or they can ask questions.

### **Part 3 (optional): Post-circle**

Inside Stories has a space for website viewers to submit their own story. They can be written on their postcard template. Another option is to create a digital story or video and post the link onto the postcard.

## 6. CLOSING ROUND

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**A closing round can provide a good space to reflect on the session and think about any key learnings.**

- Set up chairs in a circle where all participants can see each other
- Invite participants to close the session with a closing round including any of the following:
  - One thing you learned that you are taking away and how you will use it
  - What your first steps will be in working to build a more welcoming community
  - One word that describes how you are feeling leaving the session today
- After the round, thank the group for their participation and refer participants to resources that may be available for more information.

**Option:** Bring a folder of pictures cut out from magazines or calendars. Ask participants to choose the image that reflects their learnings or their feelings from the day (depending on what you ask in the closing round). Allow a few minutes for participants to choose the image, then back in a circle participants share why they chose that particular picture.

APPENDIX A

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## DIVERSITY BINGO HANDOUT

Was born outside of Canada	Is the oldest in their family	Is taller than you	Knows someone who is gay or lesbian	Can say hi & bye in more than 2 languages
Has the same eye colour as you	Has been in a pride parade	Speaks a language different than you	Has a different hair colour than you	Knows where Tagalog is spoken
Is vegetarian	Can explain something about Lunar New Year	Knows at least 2 of their neighbours	Has lived on a farm	Has traveled to 6 or more countries
Speaks more than one language fluently	Has done a favour for his/her neighbour	Can give an example of a stereotype	Has attended a religious ceremony different from their own religion	Was born in Canada but outside of BC
Has a hidden disability	Wears glasses	Plays a sport	Has been on an airplane	Plays a musical instrument

**APPENDIX B**

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**151 Things I Can Do To Build Social Capital In My Community**

\* Adapted from Bank of I.D.E.A.S. ([www.bankofideas.com.au](http://www.bankofideas.com.au))

Social Capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day

*'Be the change you want to see in the world' (Mahatma Gandhi)*

- Organize a street dinner to welcome a new neighbour
- Vote in local government elections
- Actively support local businesses
- Volunteer your special skills to a local organization
- Start a community garden
- Surprise a new neighbour by making a favourite dish – and include the recipe
- Don't gossip
- Stop and help fix someone's flat tire
- Vote in local municipal elections
- Get to know your children's teachers
- Volunteer in your child's classroom or offer being a volunteer on a field trip
- Answer surveys when asked
- Help coach a local sports group – even if you don't have a child playing
- Join a carpool
- Employers: Give employees time (e.g. 3 days per year) to work on a community project
- Plan a "Walking Tour" of a local historic area
- Have family dinners and read to your children
- Join a local Emergency Services group
- Gather a group to clean up a local park or nature reserve
- Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family
- Provide transport to young people who would not otherwise be able to participate in community activities
- Bake a cake for work colleagues
- Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see
- Call or email an old friend
- Talk to your children or parents about their day
- Greet strangers you pass in the street
- Exercise together or take walks with friends or family
- Assist with or create your town or neighbourhood's newsletter/newspaper
- Join a book club discussion group
- Write regular letters to your children highlighting why you admire them
- Reduce the amount of television you watch as a family
- Plan a reunion of family, friends, or those with whom you had a special connection

- Participate in programs offered at local library
- Read the local community newspaper thoroughly
- Pick it up even if you didn't drop it
- Hire some local young people for odd jobs around your house
- Start a tradition
- Send a "thank you" letter to the Editor of a community newspaper about a person or event that helped build community
- When inspired, write personal notes to friends and neighbours
- Attend local art exhibition openings
- Organize a street garage sale
- Say hi to others in lifts
- Offer to watch your neighbour's home or apartment while they are away
- See if your neighbour needs anything when you are going to the local shops
- Ask to see a friend's family photos
- Share with neighbours any surplus fruit from your fruit trees
- Thank shop assistants for excellent service
- Donate unused household items and books to local schools, annual fairs or charitable groups
- Invite the neighbours over for a barbecue
- Organize a monthly picnic with family and/or friends
- Write a letter to the local newspaper about an issue, concern or local opportunity
- Visit and buy at local markets
- Join a leadership development group in your community
- Instigate a lunchtime activity or study group at your place of work
- Offer to mentor a local young person
- Document your family history / construct your family tree
- Take time to know and communicate with young people who live in your street
- Avoid pigeon holing of young people and generalizing about their behaviour, opinions or ideas
- Donate blood, and encourage others to do so
- Confide in a young person. Ask their opinion on issues you are struggling with
- Work less, play and connect with the community more
- Record your parents' stories and recollections, and share with your children
- Plan and plant street verge trees/shrubbery with neighbours and rotate care for them
- Ask neighbours for help and reciprocate
- Register for a hobby class and go
- Encourage the local school to hold a M.A.D. Day – Make a Difference Day, where students identify and work on a project they believe would make their community a better place
- Highlight with a letter/article in the local newspaper the positive contribution of local young women and men
- Raise funds for a youth-lead organization or event
- Take a daily walk, greet and make eye contact with everyone you pass

- Organize a vacation with friends
- Write letters to community members (especially young people) who contribute to the community or achieve in arts, sports, education or service
- Give regularly to a local food bank
- Invite some people without family to join your family for Christmas lunch
- Organize a „Walking School Bus“ that encourages young people to walk to school rather than being driven
- Invite a single diner to join your groups table for a meal
- Support local organizations engaged in recycling
- Join a local conservation project related to local bush land or creek / river
- Encourage your children to coach / tutor younger children
- Contribute to suggestion boxes, especially those related to community activities
- Be a tourist in your own backyard
- Share your community and its tourism attractions with visiting family and friends
- Avoid road rage
- Call a radio talk back show and share great aspects of your community
- Write to your grandchildren regularly sharing important reminiscents about your life
- Take local tourism brochures with you on holidays and leave with visited organizations / people
- Volunteer to spend time with a person with a disability to enable a carer to have a break
- Ask local young people to solve a community problem / issue
- Encourage and support your children to raise funds for a good idea
- Make time to read the local newspaper from cover to cover and contribute a local story
- Get to know local elected council members and share your ideas and opinions
- Read a story with a child
- Learn about the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the lands where you live
- Learn at least one good joke and share ([www.goodcleanjokes.com](http://www.goodcleanjokes.com))
- Write to someone who inspired you
- Give you phone number to five people in your street
- Offer time as a volunteer (
- Declare your home a violence free zone and make a commitment to never use words or actions that hurt people
- Raise no violent children e.g. encourage imaginative, cooperative and non violent play, don't use violence as a form of punishment
- Always insist on people to “meet, greet and farewell” people at any community event, and offer to do it
- Make it a practice to talk to strangers e.g. at the supermarket checkout, on the bus, in the seat next to you, on the plane etc.
- Print off your own “Certificate of Kindness” and distribute when you see random acts of kindness
- Create a “friendship Dinner” – 5 to 10 families become part of a monthly shared dinner arrangement
- Give people the benefit of the doubt

- Offer a person with a few items to go ahead of you in the shopping queue
- Surprise someone with a small gift that they may be unable to afford
- Step aside and allow any frail or elderly person to go ahead in a queue
- Consciously listen whenever engaged in conversation
- Seek to accentuate “the positive in language”
- Make everyday a “hug day”
- If you come across a fallen item off a supermarket shelf, pick it up and put it back on the shelf
- Pick up a piece of litter everyday
- Always thanks sales staff or any other customer service staff
- Laugh a lot
- Pen letters / emails of appreciation to groups who are involved in community building
- Regularly give surplus books, clothes, toys etc. to local charity groups
- Offer to help people in difficulty – the person without the coin for the parking meter, someone lost, a driver trying to get into a difficult parking spot etc.
- Become involved with one out of work person to help them find a job
- Find an expired parking meter if you see a parking inspector in the vicinity
- Ensure you are correctly enrolled to vote
- Take an interest in local government issues – observe council meetings
- Participate in a local Aboriginal community event
- Attend public consultation sessions on major policy legislation
- Talk to your children about current affairs
- Get to know your local politicians – local, state and federal
- Join the local neighbourhood / community development association
- Write a letter to the editor about one issue you care about
- Walk, do not drive to the local shop
- Speak out against discrimination of any type
- Introduce yourself to neighbours or organize a street barbeque
- Instigate random acts of kindness.
- Give away surplus fruit and vegetables to neighbours.