

# VANCOUVER DIALOGUES

First Nations,  
Urban Aboriginal  
and Immigrant  
Communities

“New Canadians want to know about our Aboriginal peoples because they sense that they have a wisdom, knowledge and history which will help immigrants understand Canada as a land with an ancient human history as well as an incredible natural richness. You cannot come to this country and spend time without realizing the important relationship we, who are newcomers, can have with the original inhabitants. This can only be enlightening and enriching. The Dialogues Project helps to create these connections in a meaningful, personal way. We need Dialogues across the country!”

The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson  
26th Governor General of Canada

## **Vancouver Dialogues:**

First Nations, Urban Aboriginal  
and Immigrant Communities

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Author: Zool Suleman  
Editorial & research: Baldwin Wong & Karen Fong  
Design and art direction: Lam Wong, Design + Format  
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# 01 BEGINNING A JOURNEY

## Stories

Stories build community and create understanding. They are the memories and oral histories of peoples who have taken different journeys to create a home in Vancouver. The City of Vancouver Dialogues Project aimed to create cohesive communities by exploring the stories of Vancouver's First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities.

What is it that we all share? What do we want to know about each other? What are our respective pasts and presents and futures? Through hosting Dialogue Circles, in-depth interviews, surveys and participatory research, cultural exchanges, celebratory events, and youth and Elder engagement, the Dialogues Project has involved hundreds of participants and created a legacy of understanding between Canada's original inhabitants and newcomers to Canada.

The land where we live is *both* unceded Coast Salish territory *and* the City of Vancouver – more than one hundred and twenty-five years old as an incorporated entity. The 2006 census recorded 11,145 Aboriginal people living in the city and a total population of close to six hundred thousand.

Canadian cities have been drawing increasing numbers of inhabitants over the past five decades. In Vancouver's case, based on the 2006 census, close to half of the population now consists of immigrants, i.e. people born outside of Canada.

Vancouver consists of many communities defined in various ways. The Dialogues Project focuses on three of these communities. The original inhabitants, the First Nations; the urban Aboriginal peoples who have come to Vancouver from other territories; and immigrants, those who are newcomers to Vancouver.

These three communities together embrace Canada's past and future but all too often they do not share a common understanding of each other. Stereotypes and a lack of information are the unfortunate realities with which we live. Through the engagement of approximately two thousand

Opposite:  
View of sunset and  
clouds from the  
Musqueam Indian  
Reserve (1936).



participants over a nineteen-month period, the Dialogues Project created a preliminary conversation among these communities.

The Project was guided by a Project Steering Group co-chaired by Wade Grant, Susan Tatoosh and Professor Henry Yu. The Project Steering Group met as required and had representation from a broad range of First Nations, urban Aboriginal, immigrant settlement, educational, Neighbourhood Houses, and other interested groups.

Genuine conversation requires a willingness to speak, to listen, and to learn new things. It also requires participants to unlearn misconceptions, to set aside judgment and to hear with an open heart. Understanding requires mutual respect, sharing and some ability to trust the process.

The participants in the Project embraced these values and gave of themselves. Everyone was aware that what was taking place was a history-making moment. Communities were being engaged and much goodwill was shared by all. Many did not want the sharing to end and saw the Dialogue Circles, Cultural Exchanges and other aspects of the Project as a beginning and not an end. They want more sharing to follow as a legacy of the Project.



Top: Rocks in water along False Creek seawall. Above: Project co-chairs Henry Yu, Susan Tatoosh and Wade Grant

# 02 DIALOGUE CIRCLES

The Dialogue Circles were a key element of the Project. A Dialogue Circle is a discussion group where interested participants get together to talk about a particular topic. Such circles have a deep and sacred place in many cultures around the world and in particular in the First Nations cultures of Canada. A Dialogue Circle creates a safe space where participants can engage in honest discussion without feeling defensive or criticized.

The Project convened nine Dialogue Circles, two specifically designed to include youth voices. Each circle was hosted by a trained and experienced facilitator. The circles were held at various locations in the City of Vancouver, including Neighbourhood Houses, immigrant settlement organizations, First Nations territories, and urban Aboriginal places of gathering. The facilitators and locations were chosen to reflect the broad range of engaged communities and to create accessibility. The participants were invited on the basis of their expressed interest in the Project, and their representative roles within specific communities as Elders or leaders or otherwise. Youth and Elders were chosen to represent a broad continuum of time and a variety of voices.

From the beginning, the participants agreed to conduct themselves in respectful dialogue, to speak from their experiences and to not be judgmental – to engage in open-minded dialogue. The facilitators outlined a code of conduct which all agreed to in advance of participation. There was also agreement that all comments would remain anonymous outside of the circles.

The participants agreed to attend three separate two-hour meetings with their selected group at a pre-set location. Each of the meetings had a topic. The first focused on “remembering the past,” the second on “current issues and initiatives” and the third on “envisioning and developing strategies” for future collaborative relationships.

The Dialogue Circles, over time, created a bond of trust and communication among the participants. Many stories were shared – about hurt, loss, belonging, home, learning, land, traditions, history and more.

# 03 LEARNING FROM SHARING

Each Dialogue Circle had its own dynamic. As the trust and respect among the participants grew, a rich and substantial sharing of experiences began to take place. The stories are too numerous to account but it was clear that some themes emerged from the twenty-seven circles that took place.

A major and recurring theme was one of **seeking understanding**.

The First Nations and urban Aboriginal voices repeatedly spoke of how they, as the original inhabitants of this land, were not understood. Immigrants did not have enough knowledge about the original peoples of Canada. There was discussion about what the term “immigrant” meant. Participants included recent immigrants to Canada as well as those whose families had been in Canada for several generations. There was a lack of and erasure of histories. What information immigrants did have was limited in scope, full of stereotypes and largely from the dominant view. Immigrants needed to understand the Aboriginal history of being colonized and the relationships of Aboriginal peoples to their land and ceremonies. All Aboriginal peoples are not the same. There is a rich tapestry of languages, ceremonies, traditions and histories within this group often monolithically referred to as “First Nation” or “urban Aboriginal”.

Immigrant participants voiced their desire to seek understanding but lacked information. A lack of interaction with Aboriginal peoples resulted in little lived experience from which to learn about Aboriginal peoples first hand.

Some participants referred to the histories of early immigrants from Asia who had been able to establish relationships with Aboriginal peoples, but they knew little of this history or the nature of the relationships. Later, immigrants arriving from other parts of the world found it hard to access information about Canada’s Aboriginal peoples. Some immigrants wanted to have deeper conversations with Aboriginal people but found few opportunities to pursue these conversations. Enforced and misinformed differences and stereotypes began to take root, and continue to take root, even today.



Onlookers and drummers at a canoe race at the Mission Indian Reserve No.1 in North Vancouver, 1962.

The Dialogue Circles provided one of the first structured conversations that many participants had ever had to try to understand each other.

**Racism.** Its past and its continued effects on the lives of many of the participants was another theme which emerged from the circles.

Being the objects of prejudice, stereotypes, and ignorance was something that both Aboriginals and visible minority immigrants shared. The resulting anger, fear, isolation, helplessness, and lack of self-worth were brought out in the stories that were shared. On this theme, there was a knowing understanding among all of the Aboriginal participants and most of the immigrant participants.

A Dialogue Circle participant, an immigrant from Sierra Leone, noted, “my journey has been about unlearning. Unlearning ‘whiteness’ and white privilege, unlearning self-hate, unlearning subjectivity/objectivity as an immigrant, as a black young girl, as a woman. I am learning the history of this land.”

This theme emphasized the point that while the Dialogues Project attempted to make distinctions as to what constituted First Nations, urban Aboriginals and immigrants, the experiences and histories within and between each of these groups did not bear easy definition.

Self-definition is what the participants sought. They spoke of how imposed definitions had acted to bar them from defining themselves. Often their identities and experiences had been shaped by others rather than themselves. Within the circles, participants could begin to self-define and even create new connections among themselves, using different terms than just “original inhabitants” or “newcomers” and choosing descriptions such as “those who have faced racism,” and “those whose peoples have been immigrants to Canada for over a hundred years.”

All participants agreed that there needed to be more efforts made to learn about each other. **Learning** about each other was a major topic of dialogue.

How to learn?

Aboriginal voices spoke of traditional ways of learning from Elders and oral histories, and of a deep connection to land, ceremony and tradition as a way to gain and convey knowledge. It was not about “book learning” but about the experience of being Aboriginal. There was a collective mourning for histories lost and hope for traditions which were slowly being revived. Many Aboriginal voices spoke of being forced to give up their language and traditions, and of feeling a loss of their homes, families, and ways of life. The relationship between learning and identity formation was a repeated theme.

Recent immigrants noted that when they arrived in Canada, they were given no information introducing them to the Aboriginal cultures of Canada. The histories and the current realities of Aboriginal people from the Aboriginal perspective were hard to find. Many gained their first impressions of Aboriginal life in Canada from media stereotypes and what they heard from others within their community. Those immigrants who looked deeper and who established relationships with Aboriginal peoples were shocked to learn of the tragic history of state/Aboriginal relationships in Canada. One participant said, “I remember when I was a very new immigrant...I hadn't seen any Aboriginal people before, I didn't know them, it was a new place. When I studied at university and knew more, my impression was that they had a very [unhappy] history. But when I talk to people and work with people I start thinking that there are many things I did not know, that if I did not work with you in this setting I would never know.”



From top to bottom: Squamish Chief George and his daughter, from the village of Senaq (what is now known as Kitsilano). Portrait of Ne-kow-se-sla, the ‘Legend Bearer’, a Kwakiutl woman. Chinese men in front of post office at the Royal City Planing Mill. Photo taken sometime in the late 19th or early 20th century.



Tommy Moses  
(from the  
Squamish  
First Nation)  
canoeing in  
front of Siwash  
Rock near what  
is today known  
as Stanley Park.

**“When I moved to Canada a few years back I went to UBC with a Lillooet person (we’re still good friends). When she learned I was interested in learning, she took me to many gatherings, took me up to her territory in Lillooet. It was a mind-blowing experience to learn about this whole new culture. Some Elders didn’t even speak English!”** (Dialogue participant)

Canada is a nation of geographies which are stunning in sight and large in scope. The idea of **land and belonging** was a foundational theme in the circles. First Nations and urban Aboriginal voices expressed deep pain at the loss of their traditional lands.

Land is more than simple geography for Aboriginal peoples. It is the root of their spirit, belonging and way of life. Title, treaty, tradition, tragedy – these were some of the larger questions which emerged from the stories.

For immigrants, land often represented a different notion – the land they left behind. The land they still sometimes called “home.” Canada is and is not, “home.” Land also became a point where more information was needed to dispel misinformation. What were First Nations seeking in their claims to land? How would it affect immigrants and other “Canadians”? These broader questions were just touched upon.



**“Many people who have had atrocities against them, they have been able to leave, recover, and return to reclaim their heritage and history – we have not had this chance.”** (Aboriginal Dialogue participant)

The history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and their treatment at the hands of settlers and colonizers has often been one of betrayal, denial, and loss. The need for a process of **reconciliation and healing** was expressed often by Aboriginal participants. Dialogue participants listened as stories of loss of language and culture, residential school abuses, family breakdown, search for identity, and other traumas were shared. Often laws, policies, regulations and government actions were viewed as being divisive and unfair mechanisms for continued oppression. Residential schools were mentioned repeatedly as a source of deep hurt. “We [society] can apologize all we want...but the wounds are always there. When we have this kind of discussion we want to bring out the best of what we want to say, but at the same time there’s a lot of pain and hurt that’s hard to bear.” (Aboriginal Dialogue participant)

While the Dialogue Circles were not primarily intended to be healing spaces, as the trust between the participants grew, they educated the participants about this major and ongoing challenge in Canadian society. It was clear that much more work needs to be done on this and other issues.



The **youth** voices in the Youth Dialogue Circles provided, at times, a renewed sense of hope and vigour. Both the Aboriginal voices and the immigrant voices spoke of the challenges of belonging in Canada and of forging their identities. Sometimes confident, sometimes tentative, these voices sought to understand each other. They wanted more contact with, and information about, each other. In these circles, the reality of Canada's recent immigration patterns became obvious. Voices from East Asia, South Asia, South and Central America, and Africa were prevalent. They spoke of the interactions that had already taken place among their various communities and they also admitted to what they did not know. Misperceptions, stereotypes, ignorance and more were discussed. The youth spoke eloquently about the need for change. Forging strong, yet hybrid identities was a familiar refrain in these circles. One young Aboriginal participant said, "I didn't go to residential school, I didn't get caught in the MCFD [Ministry of Children and Family Development] scoop. It's hard to relate to something that I never experienced. I was never culturally aware until a year ago. Since then I've started to drum and do smudges."

Opposite, far left: Members of the Squamish First Nation in front of a church in Squamish in the 1890s. Opposite from top to bottom: Coast Salish Aboriginal women and children, Vancouver, 1903. Children in front of totem poles and houses at Alert Bay, 1924. Small wooden houses on the Musqueam Indian Reserve (1930s?). Three children at Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, in the 1930s. Watching television in the 1960s. This page: Children at a canoe race at the Mission Indian Reserve No.1 in North Vancouver, 1962.

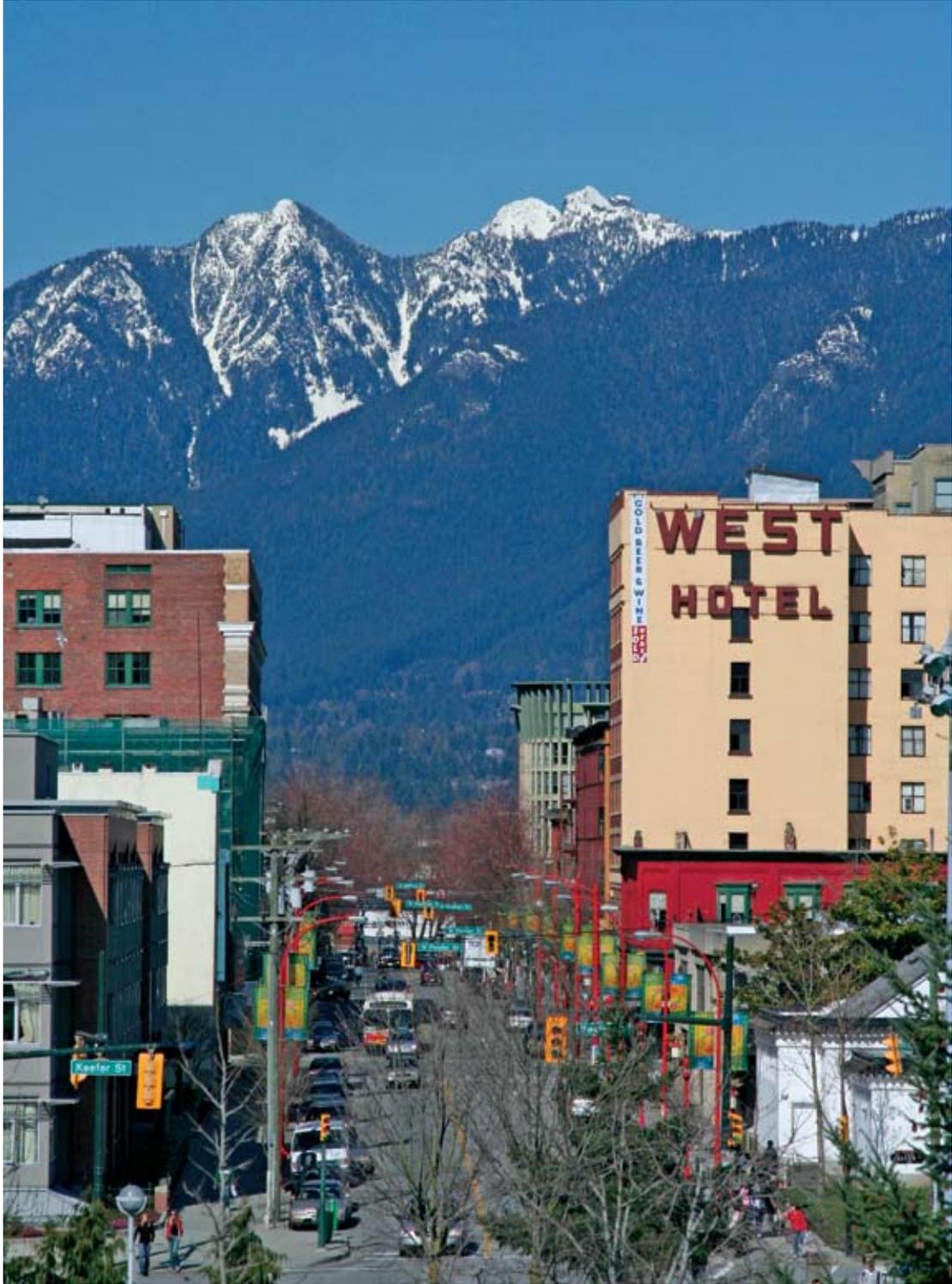


**“I was born in the east side [of Vancouver]. Being different was not a big deal to me, I’ve always kinda heard that everyone was from somewhere else.”** (Aboriginal youth Dialogue participant)

How do we identify? The theme of **identity** was central to most discussions. For First Nations and urban Aboriginal voices identity was both a source of pride and a place of deep personal hurt. The effects of history, colonialism, displacement, denial and abuse were frequently cited. There was also a sense that Aboriginal communities were re-identifying themselves and rebuilding their traditional knowledge. The theme of identity was also central to immigrant voices who, depending on the time of immigration, were not sure whether to identify as “Canadian” or whether to have some mixed identity, such as “Aboriginal/Chinese/Canadian,” or “Canadian/Muslim/African.” Identity was a mixture of history, geography, family, language, journey and more. Identity was a process of self-learning and learning within, and among, communities. Participants talked about needing to learn more about people who are of mixed Aboriginal and other cultural heritages.

“I am...” and “I am...” and “I am...” was a pattern of self-description that the participants could each relate to.

Above: *Through the Eye of the Raven*, a mural on the west wall of the Orwell Hotel, Vancouver.  
Opposite: Carrall Street, Vancouver.





**“...when Aboriginal languages are lost, it’s not just a loss to Aboriginal people, it’s a loss to everybody.”** (non-Aboriginal Dialogue participant)

Children cheering during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver.

A circle participant, who identified as Métis and an educator, made these remarks: “If you want to talk about being Canadian, to me we are really the first Canadians. The blend of First Nations and blend of our European cultures....Growing up, we were no one. We were not allowed to speak of our First Nations backgrounds. We were not allowed to speak of being Métis. We had such a rich culture but were not allowed to identify it. Métis culture is now rich and strong.”

An integral part of the complex identity mixture was the use and knowledge of a heritage **language**. Due to the restrictive laws and state-sanctioned practices in Canada’s past, many Aboriginal participants had lost their heritage languages. Many wanted to learn the languages of their peoples but found it hard. As one Aboriginal Elder shared, “my father and grandparents wouldn’t teach me the language because of the whippings he [dad] had on his hands as a result of him not being able to speak English when he went to [residential school]. They kept on whipping them every time they heard them speaking their language.” The loss of traditional languages was a paramount theme in the circles.

**“You kind of feel jealous of a culture that comes and they know their language and they know their culture. They have all those pieces that have been passed down.”** (Aboriginal Dialogue participant)

A people’s language is a window into their culture. Often for those within the culture, the language is the connection to the soul of the culture. It embodies world views and conceptions and practices which are unique. This sense of the importance of heritage languages was also echoed by immigrants who were losing touch with the language of their peoples.

Just as it was important for the Aboriginal peoples involved in the Project to identify themselves as First Nations or urban Aboriginal or Métis or otherwise, the immigrant voices in the circles felt that it was important to differentiate between immigrants and **refugees**. Refugees come to Canada and are permitted to enter Canada due to Canada’s commitment to international law and international human rights norms. Refugees in Canada had tales to tell of their difficult journeys. Whether they were government sponsored or privately sponsored or had made their way to Canada’s shores to seek asylum, the refugee voices in the circles felt that they needed to have their stories heard differently. Refugees, if accepted, do become immigrants to Canada. Immigrants on the other hand, do not need to be refugees; they can be members of other classes under the immigration system, such as skilled workers or business people or sponsored family members. The influx of new immigrants and refugees, especially over the past few decades, has played a large role in the shaping of Vancouver’s, and Canada’s, identity.

The Dialogue Circles ended with many participants feeling that the process needed to be continued. Trust had been built and stories shared. All participants felt that they had learned more about the peoples represented in the circles and some have continued their exchanges beyond the initial circles. A major theme which arose at the end of the circles was how there was a need for more dialogue, perhaps with future circles being a legacy of the Project.



Top: Josiane Anthony and Nasra Mire, Youth Community Developers with the Dialogues Project. Bottom: The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul at a dialogue session at the Central Vancouver Public Library. Below: Coast Salish collections, Museum of Anthropology.





Paul White

# 04 INFORMATION, OPINIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

In a quest to learn more about the issues, the Dialogues Project undertook three initiatives. First, it undertook a literature scan to see if there were readily available resources for new immigrants to learn about Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Second, an online community survey was initiated to engage the public about the Project. Finally, longer interviews were conducted with a group of individuals who represent different perspectives.

## Information

Many immigrants want to learn more about Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Without **information** it is hard to learn and create meaning. A literature scan provides an overview of the readily available information on a given topic. The Dialogues Project undertook such a scan to find out what information was readily available from public sources. What information was available to immigrants to learn about Aboriginal peoples? In brief, while information does exist, there were several notable concerns.

Language accessibility is a constraint. The available information is mainly in the English or French languages. For many newcomers, English and French are second, if not third languages. Language accessibility greatly limits some immigrants from learning more about Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

Much of the available information on Aboriginal people is not targeted at new immigrants but rather is aimed at the public as a whole. Government sources (web, print, etc.) which newcomers access for general information, including federal, provincial or municipal resources targeted at newcomers, generally have very limited information on Aboriginal peoples.

Opposite:  
Northeast False Creek  
seawall public art.

The available information tends to focus more on the cultural aspects of the Aboriginal peoples rather than examining the complexities of Aboriginal history or the current realities faced by Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The information presented is frequently not from an Aboriginal perspective and does not appear to have been prepared with the input of Aboriginal peoples.

The literature scan did show that the most comprehensive and complex information about Aboriginal and settler relationships is provided by Aboriginal communities themselves and other community groups.

Clearly, much more work needs to be done in this area to provide readily accessible, multilingual, and targeted information to Canada's immigrants.

## Opinions

Everyone has an opinion – but what do our **opinions** tell us about how we understand issues? As part of the Project, an online community survey took place between May and July 2010. The aim of the survey was to gather perspectives regarding Aboriginal and immigrant experiences and opinions.

By the conclusion of the survey period, close to five hundred people had participated. Most of the participants were women (75%) and the age range of the participants was mainly between the ages of 31–64. Of those who participated, 80% identified themselves as non-Aboriginal. The majority of the respondents (64%) were born in Canada and the respondents, as a whole, were very highly educated, with 86% having a college or university undergraduate or graduate level of education.

While the respondents had a generally positive view about Vancouver being a “welcoming” city, it was also their view that the city was less welcoming to Aboriginal peoples. Non-Aboriginal respondents tended to be ambivalent about whether Aboriginal peoples “understood” the immigrant communities. However, when the question was asked in reverse (Do immigrant communities understand Aboriginal peoples?), most respondents felt that immigrant communities do not have a good understanding of Aboriginal peoples’ issues.

In the survey, Aboriginal and immigrant respondents indicated that they shared a variety of experiences including racism, loss of tradition and heritage languages, lack of representation in the political decision-making process, barriers to employment and housing, and isolation.

**85%**

of respondents agree that Vancouver is a generally welcoming city.

**39%**

of respondents agree that Vancouver is welcoming towards Aboriginal people.

**73%**

of respondents agree that Vancouver is welcoming towards immigrants.



Coast Salish  
collections,  
Museum of  
Anthropology.

Possible solutions which were suggested included the use of anti-racism education, language preservation programs, advocating for greater social inclusion, and education curriculum reform. Other suggested strategies for Aboriginal and immigrant community building included the sharing of cultural celebrations, collaboration on arts initiatives, encouraging youth from the communities to work with each other, and business and economic collaborations.

## Perspectives

While the Dialogue Circles tried to address individual histories in a group setting, longer one-on-one interviews were also conducted as a part of the Project. The intent of the longer interviews was to focus on some of the larger issues raised in the Project and to gain knowledge from the different **perspectives**. These individuals were chosen because in their work and life experiences they had addressed issues of cross-cultural dialogue and exchange.

Delbert Guerin, Bing Thom, Rupinder Sidhu, Joyce Rock, Bing Wong, Richard Vedan, Steve Hanuse, Loretta Todd, Deborah Jacobs and Gabriel George shared their life experiences with the Dialogues Project. They each had a unique story to tell and represented a broad range of views. In their interviews they touched on the themes of racism, loss of language and culture, and the understanding and misunderstanding of First Nations and immigrant histories. While there was broad support for the role of intercultural dialogues and understanding among groups, there were also concerns raised about the divisive nature of existing dominant power structures.

## Delbert Guerin

In the landmark Supreme Court of Canada case of *R. v. Guerin*, the court held in 1984 that the Government of Canada had a trust-like duty towards the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

When interviewed, Delbert Guerin, an Elder of the Musqueam First Nation described the circumstances of how the lawsuit began, with characteristic humour and straight talk. “It took me five years to finally convince a lawyer to draw up the writ and file it.” He speaks candidly of his work as a band council member from 1964–1982 when the governments practiced “divide-and-rule tactics” and about the sometimes difficult relationship between the City of Vancouver and the members of his nation.

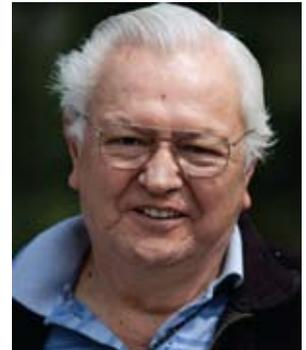
In one story, he recounts the difficult negotiations in 1969–1970 with the City of Vancouver for the City to provide garbage collection and other services to the Musqueam reserve. He recounts how in the midst of the negotiations he had a conversation with then alderman Harry Rankin. Guerin recalls Rankin as saying, “Delbert, why don’t you head on back down there [Musqueam reserve] and get your people together and come down here [City Hall] and picket this g\*\* d\*\*\* City Hall, that’ll change those guys’ minds pretty d\*\*\* quick.” Acting on the advice, he headed to the Musqueam reserve, gathered together three hundred people and surrounded City Hall and “that changed minds of the big opposition in City Council.”

He recounts how he and his family went to a restaurant and were told: “You people want to be in this restaurant, you got to sit in the corner where nobody can see you.” Racism is still present to this day, he notes, “but it’s a lot more subtle today than it was back then.”

The racism also manifests in the form of First Nations people being told that they get everything for free from various governments. “I still hear comments from people about how we get everything for free,” he says. He replies back that it is those who have come to these shores who have taken the land for “free” and not dealt with the issue of First Nations land claims – claims which continue unresolved.

Guerin thinks that one of the ways to build understanding is to “get our people out into the world working, doesn’t matter where you go in this day and age, you generally have a mixture of nationalities working [together]...it is one way that people can start melding...we got to live in harmony.”

The way forward for immigrants and First Nations, for this Elder, is to avoid divisions and to have conversations to foster understanding.



“get our people out into the world working, doesn't matter where you go in this day and age, you generally have a mixture of nationalities working [together]...it is one way that people can start melding ...we got to live in harmony.”

## Joyce Rock

Joyce Rock is the former executive director of the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House. Born in Ottawa to Irish-Canadian parents, she adopted francophone Quebec as home while a teenager. Now leaving Vancouver after thirteen years, she refers to the Downtown Eastside as a neighbourhood without pretense, “a sea of love.”

“I am a white, over-educated, middle-class woman,” she states. “The dominant culture is generally white, middle class; looks and sounds like me. Paraphrasing the African-American writer James Baldwin, she says, “What our society calls ‘morality’ is the dream of safety. And the way we arrange to make sure we feel safe is to see others in danger. That’s what makes us feel safe.” She believes that it is fear that hinders communication between communities. “What I have learned in my life and decided many years ago is that racism exists in this society because without it, I would not have the currency of privilege.”

In her view, Vancouver consists of a series of parallel communities that do not do enough to talk to, and understand, each other. Continued dialogue is a way forward, a way to understand and conquer the fear of living in a diverse city. This dialogue, however, must engage all people, not just some. She notes, “I personally get frightened when I go into a room, socially or professionally, where most of the people in the room look and sound like me ’cause that’s not the world I live in. It’s not even the Vancouver society I live in.” Her comment is that the “elites” should not be making decisions for everyone but rather that communities should be accurately represented in order for meaningful dialogue and change to take place.



Mural painted on the wall of the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House, Vancouver.

“What I have learned in my life and decided many years ago is that racism exists in this society because without it, I would not have the currency of privilege!”

## Bing Thom

Born in Hong Kong, Bing Thom is one of Canada's leading architects. His contributions to his profession and to Canada have been recognized with him being awarded the Order of Canada and the Golden Jubilee Award.

Bing Thom came to Canada in the 1950s when he was nine, while his father, an American-trained pharmacist who was not allowed to practise his profession in Canada, stayed in Hong Kong. Thom recounted many stories of facing racism and how the Chinese were excluded from practising in professions. After high school, he continued his studies at the University of California at Berkeley and became politicized; "sometimes for political change, social awareness, you have to have these defining moments where people have to say, 'I am either part of the problem or part of the solution.'"

In his work with First Nations and other communities, he is very aware that there is an "insider" and an "outsider" dialogue. Those on the inside of a community will speak and interact differently depending upon who else is present and watching. As he noted, "as much as a person with Caucasian background wants to deal with racism, unless you've experienced it, you don't understand it. There are some things we [non-whites] have in common that we can talk about that are sometimes even non-verbal."

For the future, he sees the First Nations communities breaking the cycle of dependency by pursuing their own business opportunities. "That's the future, these business relationships," he says citing examples of First Nations groups who have set up their own business ventures. He emphasizes, "it's just been too narrow a game up until now, run by Indian Affairs." He urges Aboriginal peoples to say, "Hey, look, forget it. I don't need you. I'm doing it on my own. I will find my own way" and he concludes, "then, they will."

Referring to the Dialogues Project, he commented "the good thing about the system in a way is that, just like the project you are doing, it allows opportunity for people to talk and for things to heal. Maybe that's the good thing about Vancouver, about Canada. It is a much more tolerant society, a much more engaging society. It's a more accepting society."



"sometimes for political change, social awareness, you have to have these defining moments where people have to say, 'I am either part of the problem or part of the solution.'"

## Rupinder Sidhu

Rupinder Sidhu recognizes that we are on unceded Coast Salish territories. He is a Vancouver-based performance artist and facilitator. He leads programs with a variety of organizations. His own initiative, Metaphor, is a program dedicated to bringing hip hop performances and workshops into schools, detention centers and rural communities. A member of the South Asian diaspora in Vancouver, he has roots in several communities.

A Sikh Punjabi, activist, community builder, and rooted in the arts community, he negotiates the complex terrain of race, oppression, and identity through his work.

The “dynamic of discrimination” exists on many levels, he notes. It holds “certain people in power and others in an oppressed role.” When identity is “attacked by various governmental and social systems,” then safety exists in “sticking with your own.” He elaborates, “For immigrant communities, initially, I think it is language. Where your language and your culture is, is where you feel most safe and most comfortable.”

Education around issues of difference is a key strategy that Sidhu utilizes in his life. “When I was growing up the dominant white paradigm was what was being taught in school,” he recalls. For him, youth empowerment comes from creating education programs that question the existing power structures and foster the youth voice to speak truth to power as they see it.

He fears that the Dialogues Project might just become a “token project” if it is not developed further. He states that “white people at a governmental level aren’t considering themselves immigrants. We are also born here but because we are of colour or non-white we instantly fit into the immigrant category. If you are not First Nations to Turtle Island [North America], you are an immigrant.”

He is excited that the Dialogues Project gives First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities, however they define themselves, “an opportunity to build solidarity and create something greater for future generations.”



“We are also born here but because we are of colour or non-white we instantly fit into the immigrant category. If you are not First Nations to Turtle Island [North America], you are an immigrant.”

## Deborah Jacobs

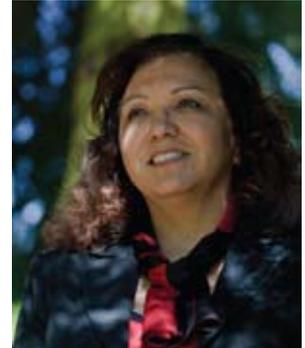
“When I look in the context of Vancouver, I look at it from the perspective of the traditional territories of my people and ancestors,” Deborah Jacobs begins. As the head of education for the Squamish Nation she lives in the community of Xwemelch’stn (also known as the Capilano section of North Vancouver).

On building relationships between First Nations and immigrant communities she states: “We do not speak enough about these relationships. I think if one of the things we were to look at is what is friendship, and the extending of a hand, we would build more on what our similarities are and have a breadth of appreciation for what folks refer to as diversity.”

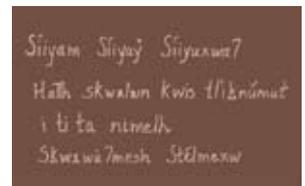
In responding to what the “founding story” of Canada is, she states “the Squamish have a view, as do most of our friends and allies from other First Nations, that we have been here since time immemorial and that Canada’s, [prevalent] founding story is really one of myth and fallacy based around looking at two cultures with two distinct languages, as though there were not other languages before the settlers came.” She makes the point that before contact, Canada had many languages other than English and French and that these languages have been systematically erased from Canada’s founding story.

“Actually it’s fascinating historically if you want to look at how immigrant communities have been co-opted in the process of actually being part of this myth in terms of non-recognition or believing that they have a right to lands and other rights, when the only languages that are not recognized in Canada per se are Aboriginal languages. There is no Aboriginal voice...yet there is recognition of two founding languages being English and French, as well as [recognition of] immigrant heritage languages...so we do not do very well at all in terms of telling these stories in Canada.”

Her focus on First Nations languages is clear, “Language is what is foundational to our identity and to our culture.” Not enough stories have been told about how systematically and through a “conspiracy of legislation,” Canada has “sought to suppress First Nations concepts of our identity through legislation.”



“Language is what is foundational to our identity and to our culture.”



‘Chiefs, Friends, and Elders; the Squamish people welcome you here to this land’, handwritten in the Squamish language by Deborah Jacobs.

## Bing Wong

Bing Wong, born in 1924, provides a historical scope to his own experiences as a Canadian-born, yet racially marked, citizen of Chinese ancestry. He describes how his family moved from Vancouver to the remote community of Alert Bay, BC, to avoid the daily racism they faced. He recalls his father, a successful businessman, as saying, “I want to bring my children up in an atmosphere where there’s no discrimination.” He grew up with First Nations children as playmates and their parents as customers in his father’s general store and coffee shop. He notes how there was a common link between the Aboriginal and Chinese communities. They were both subjected to racism and excluded from fully participating in Canadian society. Both communities share histories of intermarriage and mutual exchange. “It would be nice for the immigrant to come to know the story,” he laments.

For Wong, his experiences of Canada’s Aboriginal people are an integral part of his life in Canada. A war veteran, he recounts how he has worked hard to build and maintain links between Chinese-Canadian war veterans and Aboriginal veterans. He is proud of being selected to be the treasurer of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association.

He recounts how, after the war, he educated himself to become an accountant but could not get hired. Out of a class of two hundred, he was the only one who did not get a job or a single interview: “Being Chinese, nobody hired me.” He remembers being told that Caucasian workers “wouldn’t take orders from a Chinese accountant,” so he set up his own accounting business and with the support of the Chinese-Canadian business community from across Vancouver, he soon had about a thousand clients and eight accountants working for him.

He continues to advocate for stronger links between Aboriginal people and immigrants. As an advocate and community activist, he works with Aboriginal people on projects with the aim of greater inclusion within the urban fabric of Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods.



“I want to bring my children up in an atmosphere where there’s no discrimination.”

## Richard Vedan

Dr. Richard Vedan is a registered social worker and an associate professor of social work at UBC's School of Social Work. He was the former director of the First Nations House of Learning at the University of British Columbia (UBC). A member of the Neskonlith band of the Shuswap Nation, his research interests include social work practice methods relevant to First Nations issues and service delivery organizations that integrate traditional First Nations values and healing methods. He joined the Canadian armed forces and eventually entered a path of learning that led to his doctorate.

A second-generation survivor of the residential school system, his process of self-identification has been complex and tied up with shame and fear. Many identities have formed him.

Vancouver in the late 1970s had a "horrific" Aboriginal reality. "It was [horrific] then, in fact it is worse now," he notes. "British Columbia has a very thin veneer of polite society and the realities of race are just beneath the surface." Like Delbert Guerin, he recounts stories of racist treatment by businesses. "No one wants to deal with the 'R-word' and accept that there is overt and covert racism. And right now the covert racism, the polite racism, is much harder to deal with. And that causes people to be marginalized. And that causes people to come together in a covert, more fundamentalist way rather than getting to know people as human beings."

He notes how Canadian identity was defined by being a white, British male at one point in time. "People who were raised as oppressed colonized people adapt to that," he notes referring to the theories of Paulo Freire. "People who are oppressed want to be like their oppressor."

Immigrants need to understand the history of Canada and not view the past as "that's nothing to do with me, I just arrived." He points out that immigrants have to ask themselves why they came to Canada, "what we have to offer here is not without cost and responsibility."

He remembers comments by Aboriginal scholar Taiaiake Alfred and says, "When [Alfred's] ancestors first came in contact with Europeans, they were standing on a mountain of culture. Today we're standing on a grain of sand." This history must be understood for real understanding to take place.

"I want to be cautiously inclusive because I certainly recognize there's danger in oversimplifying [by saying] all people of colour are the same."



"the covert racism, the polite racism, is much harder to deal with."

## Steve Hanuse

For Steve Hanuse, his personal journey is now taking him to reclaim his First Nations identity. “I am in my 40s and I’m trying to regain my culture, because it wasn’t around me,” he states. He notes that there are many racist stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples and he acknowledges that “I grew up in an environment where I actually lived the stereotype and my family struggled with alcoholism and it was not a good social environment growing up.” From the Kwagulth Nation in Northern Vancouver Island, he has been a member of the Vancouver police department for more than 20 years. He is now a police constable and is also the liaison officer between the Vancouver police department and the Musqueam First Nation.

During his youth, there were “no identifiable Aboriginals for me to use as a role model.” Now he sees many such models and how they serve to encourage today’s Aboriginal youth. Aboriginal identity has “come a full 180” degrees from the 1970s when there was a lack of Aboriginal pride, to today, where it is “something to be very proud of.” He relates how working in Musqueam, he has seen the Musqueam community embrace its land and its culture. “The pride is immense down there.”

In terms of the relationship between Aboriginal and immigrant communities, he sees a great deal of commonality around the experience of racism – both communities have been subjected to racism, “whether it’s outright racism or whether it is just under the surface.” He has no recollections of Aboriginal culture being celebrated when growing up, but he now sees great promise in such celebrations as a way to build bridges of understanding between all cultures.

He draws a link between the increase of racism in the 1970s to increased immigration levels. “I would say in the 60s and 70s, there was always that fear, ‘oh, immigration is taking over our country.’ But it’s an integral part to our country growing.” Building bridges between communities is not about approaching everyone the same way but about respecting people’s different ways. “I think it’s part of our diverse community to be able to absorb others, and appreciate what they believe.”



“[Immigration] is an integral part to our country growing....I think it’s part of our diverse community to be able to absorb others, and appreciate what they believe.”

## Loretta Todd

An award-winning director, writer and producer, Loretta Todd's films focus on the historical struggles of Aboriginal peoples. Of Métis-Cree ancestry and originally from northern Alberta, she felt that she fit into Vancouver, where there were many Aboriginal people, visible minorities and mixed-race people. There was also a great deal of racism. As a filmmaker and arts activist, she remembers the 1990s when "there was a real effort to bring everyone together, to try and have dialogues with the Aboriginal community and immigrant community, particularly in the arts. In supporting one another's art we were also supporting one another's communities." While she finds the arts communities less involved in that work today, she sees dialogue about spirituality, a potential place of interchange.



She notes that she does not see enough First Nations faces in the workplace and that it is in the workplace where understanding can be built between First Nations and other communities. "They don't see enough of us in banks, or at stores, or in their offices" which reinforces the stereotype that "native people don't like to work" despite the reality of many years of racist exclusions from the workplace and despite the reality that productive work is a cornerstone of Aboriginal community values.

"...we have to participate in conversations with one another and with the land, and with who we are here."

Canada was colonized, she states, and "with colonization comes immigration." She sees a troubling movement in the world of art and literature in which the ancestors of those who colonized Canada now "make themselves over as the 'new Natives'" thus making everyone who comes after an "immigrant." What needs to happen is "a lot deeper, deeper rendering of Canadian history. We should be looking at our experience of Canada. Here on Turtle Island, Aboriginal people have histories that exist from time immemorial – as the Elders say. We didn't just begin with Canada. And yet, we can't forget that what happened in Canada four hundred years ago is part of how things are today. Above all, we have to participate in conversations with one another and with the land, and with who we are here."

In exploring ideas about colonization, she notes her own hybrid experiences. "My experience is very hybrid, my knowledge is eclectic." At a lecture she gave, she noted with dismay how one student referred to colonization as "old news." For Todd, there are many connections between what has happened to Aboriginal people in Canada and the many wars and takeovers of economies and sovereignty. She thinks we have to find new ways to imagine the world, beyond colonial power struggles, and yet be vigilant. She is optimistic that if we honour one another and the land, perhaps we can forge new dynamics and relationships.

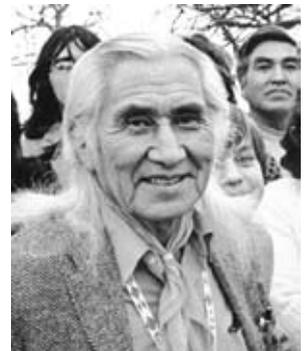
## Gabriel George

Gabriel George is the grandson of Chief Dan George, a national First Nations artist and cultural icon. George was born and raised on what was known as the Burrard Reserve, which is now a part of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. He is proud to be a member of a family that is deeply immersed in the culture of his people. He uses dance and storytelling as a way to communicate the culture of his people to others. While growing up “I wasn’t always proud of who I was, I think because of the stigma and because of being young as well. I think there are still barriers in education, there are still barriers out there for Aboriginal people in employment...but Vancouver is a good place” with opportunities and good people, he says. After contact with Europeans, he recounts the “heartbreaking” fact of his people being decimated through smallpox epidemics from a community of ten to twelve thousand people to twenty-six individuals. His people’s dialect in the Hun’qum’num language is now extinct.

Between First Nations and immigrant communities he sees many similarities. “I think a lot of the issues historically are very similar. A lot of immigrant people...didn’t have the same rights. They didn’t have the right to vote” and it was hard to serve in the military. There are “barriers to employment...scapegoating in the media.” These are issues that apply to his First Nation as well. “When I look at the Chinese community, they built this country just as much as any other part of our society, but yet you still see them carrying the stigma today, of the immigrant in them.” He sees the immigrant and First Nations relationship as an important one to nurture and build “because we’re like immigrants in our own land, in a lot of ways. But the irony is, we could tell you the history going back to before the last ice age, and we can talk about floods that had happened... yet our experience is the same as what some immigrant groups face here in Canada.” George sees much benefit in immigrants and First Nations working together, it could “be a benefit to both sides.”



“...we’re like immigrants in our own land in a lot of ways. But the irony is, we could tell you the history going back to before the last ice age...”



Chief Dan George



# 05 VISITING COMMUNITIES, BUILDING LINKS

## Visiting Communities

The word “community” has many meanings. At its heart it embodies the idea of a group whose members share something in common. The aim of the Dialogues Project was to bring different communities together to discuss issues related to First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant experiences. One of the communities would act as a host and invite participants from the other communities to visit and learn something about them. In turn, the host community would learn something about the visitors.

Twelve Cultural Exchange visits were organized as a part of the Project and more than seven hundred participants attended the various exchanges. Each visit was different and provided the host community with an opportunity to welcome visitors, share knowledge and create better understanding.

Participant surveys found high levels of engagement and satisfaction with each of the visits. Each visit had its own special moment where a connection took place. Several of the communities involved have now taken their own initiatives to plan return visits and continue with the connections made during the first visit.

Opposite:  
Totem pole carved by Nisga'a artist  
Robert Tait, from northern BC. The totem  
pole is located at Native Education  
College, Vancouver.

## **Dialogues Project – Cultural Exchange Visits**

- 1 Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre  
Sept. 26, 2010  
Sharing stories, journeys and beats: Cultural exchange between First Nations, urban Aboriginal and Mayan people in Vancouver
- 2 MOSAIC and Britannia Community Centre  
Nov. 6, 2010  
Food, dialogue and exchange: Cultural exchange between First Nations, urban Aboriginal and Afghan women in Vancouver
- 3 UBC First Nations Longhouse and Museum of Anthropology  
Nov. 9, 2010  
Exploring Aboriginal knowledge, culture and perspectives
- 4 Musqueam First Nation  
Nov. 24, 2010  
Interactive visit with Musqueam
- 5 Tsleil-Waututh Nation  
Dec. 7, 2010  
Ancestral forest walk and visit with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- 6 Britannia Community Centre  
Dec. 8, 2010  
Sharing traditional healing practices: A conversation with multicultural, First Nations and Aboriginal health practitioners
- 7 Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre  
Dec. 11, 2010  
Dialogue and exchange between Aboriginal and immigrant communities
- 8 Ismaili Council of BC  
Jan. 26, 2011  
Cultural exchange between Vancouver’s Aboriginal and Ismaili communities
- 9 Native Education College  
Feb. 9, 2011  
Sharing and learning at the Longhouse: A visit with Native Education College
- 10 Youth Community Developers  
Mar. 27, 2011  
Youth bus tour



- 11 Temple Shalom  
Apr. 14, 2011  
Telling the Jewish narrative: Cultural visit with the Jewish community
  
- 12 S.U.C.C.E.S.S.  
May 28, 2011  
Cultural exchange between Vancouver's Aboriginal and Chinese communities

Five copper domes and glazed cupolas mark the roof of the Ismaili Centre, Burnaby.



In the first visit, held at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Vancouver's community of indigenous Mayans from Central America, shared stories and music with participants from Vancouver's Aboriginal community. The Mayan and the First Nations communities found much common ground around experiences of racism and loss of indigenous lands. The communities formed a bond during the visit and the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre provided an open invitation to the Mayan community to visit and use the Centre for future events.

Linc Kesler, director of the First Nations Studies Program at UBC, who attended this visit, observed:

“Indigenous people from different countries have a lot to share in similar experiences and traditions, but they are also most often very strongly connected to geography and place....It sometimes takes as much concerted effort to establish dialogue between two indigenous communities as between an indigenous and non-indigenous one, and this event was, I think, very successful in forming such a relationship....It was particularly interesting too in the larger scope of the Dialogues Project because it challenged people to think about the often contrasted terms of ‘indigenous’ and ‘new arrival’ (or ‘settler’). While the Mayan participants are certainly comparatively recent arrivals in Vancouver, their long-standing history as an indigenous people in Central America is clear. It is this kind of complexity in thinking about people's histories that the Dialogues Project has allowed everyone to see.”

MOSAIC (Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities) and the Britannia Community Centre hosted an exchange visit for Afghan women from MOSAIC and Aboriginal women from the Sisters of the Four Corners group. The women prepared traditional foods (bannock, bolani, salmon, rice and more) and shared their practices of how they bless food and engage in prayer before eating.

For Nasra Mire, one of the youth community developers engaged by the Dialogues Project, seeing the end result of the food exchange between First Nations and Afghan women was a moment of “joy.” It was a moment to “understand others' values” and to “respect” other languages and experiences. One of the Afghan women noted how the groups soon got into the spirit of sharing and cooking together. She states, “if the world, if people do the same thing, there's no problem. It doesn't matter if it's small kitchen, or small city, or small world. People live in peace! That's my point. Sometimes small things, big things. We all should do it! As a human, respecting each other.”

At a visit hosted by the UBC First Nations House of Learning (the UBC Longhouse) and the Museum of Anthropology, participants included not only those involved with the Project but also UBC students. In the first

Opposite:  
Vancouver Aboriginal  
Friendship Centre.



part of the day-long event, which was hosted at the UBC Longhouse, Musqueam Elder Larry Grant spoke about how the Musqueam had lived continuously in the Musqueam village for over four thousand years. He spoke with emotion about how with colonization, the Musqueam “Indian reserve” was created and likened it to a minimum security internment camp. He also explained that his father was of Chinese heritage, and his mother was an Aboriginal woman. Being of “mixed race,” he studied in Chinatown but retained a strong link to his First Nations roots. The participants asked engaging questions about the history of the First Nations in Vancouver.



After lunch at the UBC Longhouse, the participants visited the nearby Museum of Anthropology and were given a tour of the museum. The participants then watched two short films: one about the museum’s native youth program and the other about the traditional Kwakwaka’wakw potlatch by Namgis filmmaker, Barb Cranmer. After the films were presented, the participants were able to ask questions of artists Mike Dangeli and Mique’l Askren, leaders of the Git Hayetsk Dancers, an urban Aboriginal dance group.



The realities of being urban Aboriginal were explored during the question and answer session. The artists pointed out that the idea of being an “urban” Aboriginal is not a static identity. How identity is defined is a conscious choice and many urban Aboriginal people struggle with their roots in small communities and city life in Vancouver. Patriarchy, matrilineal traditions, land claim negotiations, and negotiating the boundary between “private” and “public” art practices were some of the issues explored during this cultural visit.

A visit hosted by the Musqueam First Nation gave participants an opportunity to learn about the Musqueam people. For many, this was the first time they had visited this land near UBC and on the banks of the Fraser River. Musqueam speakers shared some aspects of their history and traditional ways of life. They also addressed some of the effects of colonialism and discussed current issues, such as land claims. Over a lunch of traditional Coast Salish foods, the short film, *Musqueam Through Time* was shown. For the last part of the visit, participants were given a tour of parts of the Musqueam grounds, including a salmon stream restoration, an archaeological research site, the traditional longhouse and the site where a new cultural pavilion (formerly used for the 2010 Winter Olympics) is located. Provincial MLA Richard T. Lee attended this visit and remarked that his grandfather, who came to Canada in 1913, had farmed with his partner on leased land inside the Musqueam First Nation until 1965. The farm was known as Hong Kong Garden. His story spoke to the fact that in earlier times, there existed stronger ties between the communities.



Opposite:  
First Nations Longhouse,  
UBC. This page, from top  
to bottom: Lion statue at  
the Millennium Gate in  
Chinatown, Vancouver. Coast  
Salish collections, Museum of  
Anthropology. Richard T. Lee  
in front of old farmhouse at  
Musqueam.

The Tsleil-Waututh Nation organized an Ancestral Forest Walk and visit for participants at Cates Park in North Vancouver. The park sits on traditional Tsleil-Waututh territories and the forest walk was one of the highlights of this visit. Participants learned about how the Tsleil-Waututh became known as “wolf people” (Takaya). Traditional village site locations and legends were shared. After lunch, the Children of Takaya ensemble performed traditional songs and dances. The speakers referred not only to the past but to the current economic and treaty-making initiatives of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.



Traditional medicine practices and the sacredness of food were at the core of a gathering featuring traditional health practitioners. Aboriginal healers Old Hands and Alannah Atley; traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, Dr. Fang Liu; and Dr. Leoncio Ventura, a Mayan person who also practices Chinese medicine, discussed the various traditional approaches to healing and the need for wellness and alternative healing as a part of daily life.



The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre hosted an exchange visit on the theme of “dialogue and exchange between Aboriginal and immigrant communities.” The hosts explained how the Friendship Centre arose from the political and cultural movements in the 1960s to create a hub for the urban Aboriginal community. The centre provides a broad range of community services for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people including programs for youth and Elders. Food was shared and Nisga’a Nation performers sang traditional songs and urged participants to join in the traditional dancing.



The Ismaili Muslim community hosted a visit at the Ismaili Centre, Burnaby, which was opened in 1985. The hosts began by providing a tour of the Ismaili Centre, which has been designed in keeping with the principles of Islamic architecture and the traditions of their faith. The tour highlighted the spaces for social and cultural gatherings, meetings and intellectual engagement, as well as for spiritual contemplation. A luncheon of cultural foods was provided and followed by presentations about the community’s establishment in Vancouver and also the global work of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit and Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould of the BC Assembly of First Nations spoke about the need to build alliances between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and Project Steering Group co-chair, Wade Grant, provided the final thank you comments.



“Sharing and learning” were the two main themes of a visit hosted by the Native Education College, which since 1985 has been a learning place for urban Aboriginal students from all across Canada. Elder Audrey Rivers provided the traditional welcome and shared stories about the Squamish peoples. The event included a welcoming ceremony modeled

From top to bottom:  
 Guides from Takaya Tours lead the forest walk along Burrard Inlet. Takaya means ‘wolf’ in the language of the Tsleil-Watututh Nation. Tsleil-Waututh community members. A winter view of the Ismaili Centre, Burnaby.

on the one shared with students who come to the college to study every year. Participants entered the longhouse-shaped building through the traditional door, symbolically leaving negative energy outside and entering a positive learning environment. Many of the students at the college come to Vancouver from rural reserve environments and the move to Vancouver is often their first large urban experience. The participants viewed and participated in traditional performances by Russell Wallace and Bob Baker and took part in a traditional themed dinner.



Youth are an important part of the Project. An all-day bus tour was organized to have youth from diverse Aboriginal and immigrant backgrounds visit various organizations. The youth shared tips on how to build youth community capacity. Some participants showcased their skills and interests through a Jiu Jitsu martial arts demonstration and the performance of an original rap song. Other stops on the tour included the Urban Native Youth Association, the Britannia Community Centre and the Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association. In this exchange, participants had an inside look at organizations that many of them had never been to before. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal/immigrant/refugee youth learned about each others' communities and shared common issues, concerns and interests.



Temple Sholom hosted an event entitled "Telling the Jewish narrative: Cultural visit with the Jewish community." At this event, rabbis from various synagogues from the Metro Vancouver area and several community representatives shared about the Jewish community from religious, secular and community perspectives. Participants were given a tour of the temple and invited to view sacred religious objects such as the Torah (sacred scripture). Artist Linda Dayan Frimer spoke about an art project she collaborated on with Cree artist, George Littlechild, entitled *In Honour of Our Grandmothers*. She commented on the feelings of empathy she felt between her community and the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Stories were shared over a kosher meal and many participants learned about the significance of Passover in the Jewish faith.



After the visit, one participant who is from the Jewish community and who also participated in visits with the Musqueam and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nations noted that "because I haven't been in Vancouver that long, it was my first opportunity to meet and talk to people from the First Nations and Aboriginal communities. Generally with the Jewish and Aboriginal communities there's a sympathy there, people have been through very difficult times and adversity, but have managed to come through it."



The final Cultural Exchange, hosted by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society) was a dialogue between the Chinese and Aboriginal community. The event started with a walk

From top to bottom:  
Native Education College,  
Vancouver. Bus from the  
youth bus tour exchange with  
various organizations. Youth  
learn photography basics  
for the photovoice project.  
Artwork from the collection *In  
Honour of Our Grandmothers*  
by artists, Linda Dayan Frimer  
and George Littlechild.



Top: Urban Native Youth Association, Vancouver.  
Opposite: Millennium Gate, Chinatown, Vancouver.

in Chinatown followed by presentations by members of the Chinese community and a Chinese media panel speaking to their interest in learning more about the Aboriginal community. The gathering provided an opportunity to explore the rich history of early Chinese immigration and settlement in Vancouver and some reflections on community building and future aspirations between the two communities. Community leaders, media personnel, and others were able to explore the long history of Chinese and Aboriginal relationships in Vancouver and BC.

*Contemplate*, 2011,  
by Shya-fen Tsai

This painting by Shya-fen, who immigrated to Canada from Taiwan, was inspired by the Dialogues Project and the artist's own indigenous ancestry.







In front of the Musqueam band office.



Monument from the Chinatown Memorial on Keefer Street, Chinatown, Vancouver.



Tsleil-Waututh  
community  
members  
canoeing during  
the 2010 Winter  
Olympic Games  
in Vancouver.

## Building Links

“I found the recent visit to the Temple Shalom to be a quite powerful experience,” Linc Kesler, Project Steering Group member, stated when asked about his thoughts on the cultural exchanges he participated in. “It gave people ways to think about the complexity of larger cultural groups. People who have attended sessions at the Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh communities, or at the Friendship Centre, have had the chance to understand some of the many different cultural groups and traditions that form what they may think of as a larger Aboriginal community. Similarly, it has given Aboriginal participants the chance to understand the incredible variety of cultures and histories that form recent immigration even from the single region of Asia, and, in the case of the temple visit, to understand the vastly different histories that we might think of as European.”

The cultural exchanges resulted in many community networks and relationships being established. Since the exchanges ended, the communities involved, on their own initiative, have continued with various visits and exchanges.

Some Vancouver School Board staff participated in a number of the cultural visits. One staff member found that “the strong, at times, bitter

sentiments expressed by the Aboriginal speakers, guests and attendees revealed the complex and disturbing reality of a long-standing and continuing difference which needs to be addressed. For me, I find that the cultural aspects of the Aboriginal people are extremely intriguing and perhaps a great starting point for newcomer immigrant students and families to begin the adventure to learn and connect with them before they are bombarded with negative images and stereotyping by the mass media at large.” Inspired by the cultural visits, the Vancouver School Board Settlement Program initiated their own youth engagement project, which involved more than two hundred students and parents, with the focus of exploring the historical and current day encounters between the Aboriginal and Chinese communities.

The Dialogues Project has also learned of other initiatives planned by groups or organizations that participated in the Cultural Exchange visits.

Communities. Connections. Engagement and sharing, which lead to understanding. These were some of the hoped-for objectives of the Cultural Exchange visits. With the last of the visits completed, communities can now begin to explore their own initiatives. The Dialogues Project hopes to have begun the dialogue for continued understanding between the First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities.

Museum of  
Anthropology,  
UBC.





# 06 RESPECTING ELDERS, ENGAGING YOUTH

The dialogue between Elders and youth is another component of the Dialogues Project. The intent of this part of the Project was to gather some of the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders and immigrant seniors, and to share it with the youth participants. In turn, the youth provided their views on how to create positive changes and learn from engaging with the Elders and seniors.

## **Respecting Elders**

The Elders Program engaged more than twenty Aboriginal Elders and immigrant seniors. They met four times to discuss intercultural and intergenerational issues. Each session started with a traditional First Nations prayer and welcome. The sessions focused on questions of what the communities had in common such as values and challenges. The participants also spoke about what concerns were unique to each community and how to build better understanding and stronger relationships between Aboriginal and immigrant communities.

The Elders and seniors found that they had much in common: concerns about health, housing, transportation, loss of history, and the communication gap between generations. A Musqueam Elder pointed out with his characteristic humor, “Holy smokes, I’m one of the Elders now. It sneaks up on you.”

The Elders and seniors were eager for more community engagements to take place so that they could share their stories and build support systems to avoid isolation. Common themes about racism, exclusion, and lack of knowledge about other communities, were raised. Participants noted that sometimes seniors want to socialize with members of their own community since it is easier and familiar. Building bridges between communities takes more effort but it can also be more rewarding.

An immigrant from Taiwan who is also an artist, noted, “there are more similarities than we think.” These sentiments were echoed by an Aboriginal

Opposite:  
Squamish  
basket maker  
Sophie Frank in  
1903.

Elder who stated: “It’s so important to recognize that we’re all relatives and we should treat each other as relatives.”

At one session, filmmaker Kamala Todd presented her film *Our City Our Voices* about First Nations Elders from three Coast Salish communities. The film explained the protocols attached to each of the traditional territories and captured some of the Elders’ stories. In response to the film, Elders and seniors spoke about how important it was to share stories with the youth. Some participants commented about how difficult it was to get and share information about the First Nations of Canada. For this age group, simply having websites and web-based social networking is not the best way to provide information. The participants expressed a desire for these dialogues to continue so as to build momentum from the meetings already held.

In relating his knowledge of the Jewish experience during World War II, one participant noted, “It’s important to preserve these stories.”

## Engaging Youth

A part of the Dialogues Project involved eight staff youth community developers, four of Aboriginal background and four of immigrant background. They participated in the Dialogue Circles, Cultural Exchanges and all components of the Dialogues Project. The youth community developers played a vital role in reaching out to the more than two hundred and fifty youth who participated in the Dialogues Project in one manner or another. The youth brought their own complex views to the Project and greatly added to its outcomes.

Approximately forty Aboriginal and immigrant youth between the ages of 15–24 were involved with the Elders and youth dialogue program. The youth had sessions amongst themselves to discuss issues around intercultural and intergenerational relations. They talked about issues of power and privilege and ways of bridging group divides. The youth then met with some of the Elder and senior participants, over a meal, to share stories.

Some of the youth participants, Aboriginal Elders and seniors were provided training in photography so as to prepare a “Photovoice” project in collaboration with each other. Photovoice is a community development and education tool that combines photography with grassroots social action. It is often used as a means of conveying peoples’ circumstances and hopes for the future. For the Dialogues Project, the young and the



From top to bottom:  
Coast Salish drummer at  
the Multicultural Seniors  
Festival. Cheyenne LaVallee,  
Youth Community Developer,  
Dialogues Project. Youth and  
Elders photovoice group.

elderly worked in small teams to capture images that reflected the group discussions that took place. The resulting photos were then a part of an installation reflecting the interchange among participants.

The Elders and seniors expressed a deep desire to work with the youth. An Aboriginal Elder pointed out, “We were like you guys once too....Youth would benefit from knowing they’re not alone.”

“Most of us are deeply affected by racism and so are young people,” another Elder pointed out. “It’s so important to let the young people know that we love them. We want to share what we can to help them lead a good life. We need to listen to them....When we get to a certain point with our youth it’s time for them to become independent.”

The Dialogues Project attempted to build bridges not only between First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities, but also between the Elder and youth generations within those communities. Initial responses suggest that there is a great need for such an intergenerational and intercultural dialogue to continue.

Aboriginal Elder, Queenie Comanda, and Youth Community Developer, Arman Zamani, practise with the camera for their photovoice project.



# 07 FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

## Future Directions

Overwhelmingly, those who have been involved with the Project have asked for a **continued dialogue** about the issues which have been raised. There is a sense that the process of talking and understanding has just begun and that much more discussion needs to take place among First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities around the themes that have been identified.

Many participants prioritized the topic of **education**. There needs to be a focused effort to educate all communities about the historical and present day realities faced by the First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities of Canada. Immigrant communities need to know about these realities before their arrival in Canada and learn more after they get here. The Aboriginal history of Canada must be a priority in the education system and also in society at large.

**Intercultural exchanges** were viewed as one of the main ways in which to share and communicate between the three main participatory groups. These exchanges could be targeted by age groups, geography and other criteria. What is needed is a sustained effort to bridge and understand differences so as to create aware and sharing communities, not communities divided by ignorance and fear.

The role of **arts, culture and heritage** as the means by which to educate the general public about the issues raised, was also highlighted. The cultural heritage of First Nations peoples and that of immigrants to Canada, can serve as a bridge for better understanding. Artistic endeavors may include video, dance, theatre, storytelling and more. These projects would serve to entertain, educate and build understanding between communities.

The youth have been a vital part of this Project. The youth community developers, the youth involvement in different phases of the Project, the youth/Elder dialogues, have made it clear that the next phase of the Project must provide a greater emphasis on youth voices in this continuing

dialogue. Some ideas of engaging with youth include youth community kitchen dialogues, arts projects, city-wide youth leadership and anti-racism training and other capacity-building initiatives.

## Reflections

The Dialogues Project was initiated to encourage talking and sharing among First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities. As this phase of the project comes to an end, what are some of the key reflections?

**Dialogues work.** If safe and respectful talking environments are created, participants will take the time to build trust and share their experiences. This sharing, in turn, can lead to insights which shape future personal and community engagement. Public policy can be informed by grassroots engagement. The result is a richer, more harmonious civic experience.

**Community engagement is vital.** A significant component of the Project was the engagement of communities. The First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities were part of the planning and implementation of the Project. The Project Steering Group reflected the many “interested” and “intersected” communities from First Nations, to various urban Aboriginal organizations, to immigrant settlement agencies, to Neighbourhood Houses, to community associations, to public bodies such as the Vancouver School Board, various City of Vancouver departments, institutions of learning such as UBC and the Museum of Anthropology, and more. As the Project was implemented, a sharing environment was created and many ideas to improve the project were developed during the process itself. The result has been a Project in which community input and involvement has been a central characteristic.

**Education opens the door to learning.** Over and over again, participants commented on how the Project was the beginning of a process of community education and self-education. Communities have perceptions and misperceptions about their own and other communities. Racism, mistrust, ignorance, and misunderstanding are among the key barriers to learning. This process engaged a commitment to learn more about each other and to create a better understanding.

We began this journey with the concept of stories: stories which build communities and create understanding. The stories we have heard have led us to create new relationships and to trace new possible journeys for the future.



The Dialogues Project set out to listen to and share the stories of its participants. As this phase of the Project comes to an end, the stories have been revealing. Some of the initial questions for the Project are in the process of being answered.

We have learned from various components of the project that the First Nations, urban Aboriginal and immigrant communities share a great deal. They want to know more about each other. There is a need for more dialogue and sharing to understand each other's respective pasts and presents. There is a strong desire to build trust between communities for the future.

This Project has taken some of the first steps within the City of Vancouver to build bridges of trust between communities. Let the sharing continue.

Kwakiutl woman in cedar hat and cape standing on a rock looking out to sea. Photo taken sometime in the first decade of the 1900s.

Opposite:  
Downtown waterfront,  
Vancouver.



# Acknowledgements

## Project Steering Group

The Dialogues Project Steering Group gave invaluable guidance and support throughout the project:

### Co-chairs

Cllr. Wade Grant, Musqueam First Nation  
Susan Tatoosh, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre  
Henry Yu, UBC Department of History

### Members

Melissa McDowell, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)  
Anne Nickerson, City of Vancouver, Hastings Institute  
Cllr. Geoff Meggs, City of Vancouver, Mayor's Working Group on Immigration  
Ken Tung, Civic Education Society  
Mabel Tung, Civic Education Society  
Cecily Nicholson, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre  
Patricia Woroch, Immigrant Services Society of BC  
Chris Friesen, Immigrant Services Society of BC  
Claire Reid, Institute for Canadian Citizenship (March 2010 – August 2010)  
Heather Steel, Institute for Canadian Citizenship  
Nancy McRitchie, Kiwassa Neighbourhood House  
Farid Rohani, Laurier Institution  
Eyob Naizghi, MOSAIC  
Larry Grant, Musqueam First Nation  
Jocelyne Hamel, Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House  
Daniel Hill, Native Education College (January 2010 – August 2010)  
Daniel Guinan, Native Education College  
Gary Johnston, Native Education College  
Deborah Jacobs, Squamish First Nation  
Tung Chan, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (January 2010 – October 2010)  
Thomas Tam, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.  
Leah George-Wilson, Tsleil-Waututh First Nation  
Cllr. Carleen Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh First Nation  
Cllr. Liana Martin, Tsleil-Waututh First Nation  
Linc Kesler, UBC First Nations House of Learning  
Simon Neame, UBC Irving K. Barber Learning Centre  
Jill Baird, UBC Museum of Anthropology  
Richard Vedan, UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies

Lynda Gray, Urban Native Youth Association  
Winnie Cheung, Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society  
Laara Mixon, Vancouver Community College  
Michael Yue, Vancouver Community College  
June Scudeler, Vancouver Métis Community Association  
Anne Olsen, Vancouver Public Library

## Dialogue Circles

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the dialogue circles.

Special thank you to the First Nations Education Steering Committee, UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies, Equal Employment Opportunity Program, Vancouver Public Library and the Hastings Institute for their contributions to the dialogue circles.

### Host venues

Broadway Youth Resource Centre  
Kiwassa Neighbourhood House  
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House  
Musqueam First Nation  
South Vancouver Neighbourhood House  
S.U.C.C.E.S.S.  
UBC First Nations Longhouse  
Urban Native Youth Association  
Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre

### Facilitators

Kinwa Bluesky  
Koyali Burman  
Rain Daniels  
Parker Johnson  
Norma-Jean McLaren  
Kamala Todd  
Richard Vedan  
Eric Wong (Lead Facilitator)

### Recorders

Matthew Chan  
Karen Fong  
Lanny Libby  
Dana Walker

**Aboriginal Elders  
welcoming circles**

Linda Day  
Larry Grant  
Delbert Guerin  
Lorelei Hawkins  
Roberta Price  
Susan Tatoosh  
Richard Vedan  
Glen (Seis^lom) Williams

**Circle Participants**

Sandra Almeida  
Josiane Anthony  
Natalie Baloy  
Rosalinda Barrientos  
Marlene Bolton  
Celia Brauer  
Luis Cheng  
Andy Cheung  
Shilan Chin  
Jenny Choi  
Omar Chu  
Janet Chung  
Angela Contreras-Chavez  
Talitha Cuyler  
Linda Day  
Jean DeDieu Hakizimana  
Joe Desjarlais  
Christine DeVries  
Gloria Diaz  
Ying Dwyer  
Saeed Dyanatkar  
Dennis Easter  
Claire Marie Ellis  
Freda Ens  
Maria Escolan  
Heather Forbes  
Joyce Fossella  
Desi Gabriel  
Clemencia Gomez  
Larry Grant  
Christina Gray  
Delbert Guerin  
Marilyn Gutierrez  
Alden Habacon  
Torey Hampson  
Lorelei Hawkins  
Penny Henry  
Sandy Hilyer  
Lillian Howard  
Emina Hurtic  
Kelly Ip

Maggie Ip  
Sammy Ip  
Margaret Joseph  
Jane Kalmakoff  
Rajpal Kohli  
Norman Kong  
Sharon Kwok  
Avis Lam  
Karen Larcombe  
Roman Lavender  
Reena Lazar  
Myriam Lazo  
Diana Le  
Kenny Le  
Richard T. Lee  
Audrie Leung  
Janey Lew  
Naomi Linklater  
Tony Luong  
Don MacKenzie  
Debra Martel  
Maria McDonald  
Aseefa Merali  
Harold Michell  
Idel Mire  
Nasra Mire  
Lorinda Moreau  
Pablo Munoz  
Krishna Murti  
Gurpreet Nagra  
Michelle Nguyen  
Kelvin Nguyen  
Yen Nguyen  
Lindsey Nguyen  
Debbie Nider  
Jackline Ochieng  
Balwinder Parhar  
Kate Pattison  
Huyen Pham  
Phu Pham  
Louise Point  
Roberta Price  
Jorge Salazar  
Jennifer Sarkar  
Sade Scott  
June Scudeler  
Lorinda Seto  
Odessa Shuquaya  
Patricia Soop  
Saleem Spindari  
Naomi Staddon  
Umeeda Switlo  
Susan Tatoosh

Meseret Taye  
Jeanny Thi Cao  
Thuan To  
Kevin To  
Nathan Tran  
Cecilia Vargas  
Herb Varley  
Esther Wale  
Bob Wang  
Clifford White  
Ambrose Williams  
Gerri-Lee Williams  
Glen (Seis^lom) Williams  
Laura Wilson  
Louis Wong  
Sandra Wong  
William Wong  
Fatou Wurie  
Amy Wuttunee Eustergerling  
Harley Wylie  
Michael Yue  
Dan Zhang  
Cassandra  
Selena  
Simpson  
Maddie  
Linda  
Megan

**Cultural Exchange Visits**

Thank you to all of the hosts, speakers, performers and staff who gave their support to the cultural exchange visits.

**Vancouver Aboriginal  
Friendship Centre (Visit #1)**

Susan Tatoosh  
Leoncio Ventura  
Alejandro Ruiz  
Fabiana Garcia  
Cease Wyss  
Carly Dickinson  
Kayleyla Ladies Drum Group  
Mayan marimba group

**Vancouver Aboriginal  
Friendship Centre (Visit #2)**

Clifford White  
Nisga'a Traditional Performers

**MOSAIC and Britannia  
Community Centre**

Saleem Spindari  
May Salari  
Alannah Atley  
Tom Higashio

**UBC First Nations  
Longhouse**

Linc Kesler  
Larry Grant  
Madeleine MacIvor  
Ryanne James  
Rick Ouellet  
Christine Wasiak

**Museum of Anthropology**

Jill Baird  
Damara Jacobs-Morris  
Mique'l Askren  
Mike Dangeli  
Vivienne Tutlewski

**Musqueam First Nation**

Wade Grant  
Larry Grant  
Wayne Point  
Dianne Buchan

**Tsleil-Waututh Nation**

Carleen Thomas  
Gabriel George  
Dennis Thomas  
Raelene Esteban  
Christina Kosiancic  
Children of Takaya performers

**Britannia Community Centre**

Old Hands  
Alannah Atley  
Fang Liu  
Leoncio Ventura  
Tom Higashio

**Ismaili Council for BC**

Samira Alibhai  
Ashif Somani  
Ali Solehdin  
Alim Boflo  
Hanif Virani  
Shellina Lakhdir  
Ashnoor Nagji  
Ismaili Centre volunteers

**Native Education College**

Daniel Guinan  
Gary Johnston  
Audrey Rivers  
Russell Wallace  
Bobby Baker  
Agi Paul  
Lillian Prince  
Ron Wallace

**Youth Bus Tour**

Youth Community Developers  
Carly Dickinson  
Anntuaneth Figueroa  
Tom Higashio  
Amy Johnson  
Jerilynn Webster  
Audrey Rivers

**Temple Sholom**

Rabbi Philip Bregman  
Rabbi Daniel Mikelberg  
Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan  
Rabbi Jonathan Infeld  
Rabbi Claudio Kaiser-Blueth  
Linda Dayan Frimer  
George Littlechild  
Joel Kaplan  
Shelley Rivkin  
Romi Ritter  
Charleen Grant  
Kathy Charles  
Annie Burkes

**S.U.C.C.E.S.S.**

Thomas Tam  
Henry Yu  
Wade Grant  
Larry Wong  
Maggie Ip  
Dennis Chan  
Shya-fen Tsai  
Janet Chung  
Eric Lee  
Todd Ye  
Andy Cheung  
Irvin Au-Yeung  
Chinese Canadian Historical  
Society  
Kamala Todd  
Parmenas Tse  
Kelly Ip  
Mabel Tung

**Elders and Youth Program**

Thank you to the elders and youth who shared their stories and ideas and participated in the Photovoice project.

**Participants**

Masoumeh Ahmadi  
Paul Alexander  
Ruth Alfred  
Bonnie Angel  
Brandy Baek  
Grace Balbutin  
Vanessa Buffalo  
Len Cohen  
Marian Cohen  
Queenie Commanda  
May Cooper  
Harry Crosby  
Sada Eftekhar  
William Fraser  
Fabiana Garcia  
Clemencia Gomez  
Ben Gonzales  
Mohinder Grewal  
Delbert Guerin  
Sylvia Gurstein  
Kathleen He  
Kelly Ip  
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Aline Laflamme  
Esther Lam  
Tessa Lang  
Jackie Leech  
Yang Lin  
Shyan Lolly  
Melida Mena-Robinson  
Idel Mire  
Roman Mohammad Arif  
K.C. Morrisseau  
Francesca Penafuerte  
Pauline Preston  
Azza Rojbi  
Aleen Sparrow  
Winnie Su  
Karmen Tang  
Tanner Timothy  
Sandra Todd  
Sharon Tong  
Shya-fen Tsai  
Brian Wang  
Skywalker Wang

Marjorie White  
Jonathan Wildman  
Turel Wildman  
Bing Wong  
Joan Wright  
Harley Wylie  
Nancy Zhang  
Jan Zickler

#### **Facilitators/speakers**

Kamala Todd  
Alejandro Zuluaga  
Anne Kloppenborg  
Clemencia Gomez  
William Nahanee  
Cristobel Berrio  
Vi Nguyen  
LeAnne Ragan  
Iris Young  
Lydia Luk

#### **Photovoice project team**

Lanny Libby  
Karen Fong  
Youth Community Developers  
Manjit Chand (volunteer)

#### **Story Sharing**

Thank you to all of the individuals who generously shared their thoughts, stories and experiences for the Vancouver Dialogues book and the Dialogues DVD.

#### **Book**

Gabriel George  
Delbert Guerin  
Steve Hanuse  
Deborah Jacobs  
Joyce Rock  
Bing Thom  
Loretta Todd  
Richard Vedan  
Bing Wong

#### **DVD**

Amir Ali Alibhai  
Winnie Cheung  
Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson  
Leah George-Wilson  
Larry Grant  
Damara Jacobs-Morris

John Ralston Saul  
Farid Rohani  
Marjorie White  
Baldwin Wong

#### **Interviewers**

Kamala Todd  
Kinwa Bluesky  
Paromita Naidu  
Baldwin Wong  
Karen Fong

#### **Dialogues Project DVD**

Kamala Todd  
Mike McInlay  
Joah Lui  
Shirley Claydon  
Take 5  
Sandor Gyurkovics  
Eliot Piltz  
Van Eyk Olivier

Thank you to the hosts and contributors of the project's launch and closing celebration events.

#### **Project launch event**

UBC First Nations Longhouse  
urban ink Production Society

#### **Closing celebration event**

Public Dreams Society

#### **Photos**

Thank you to all who assisted in providing photos and images.

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Rhonda Ganz  
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Howard Grant  
Larissa Grant  
Grand Chief Edward John  
Dena Klashinsky  
Anne Kloppenborg  
Chuck Lafferty  
Titania Lam  
Diana Leung  
Debra Martel  
John Ralston Saul  
Leona Sparrow  
Sandra Todd  
Dalia Vukmirovich  
Jody Wilson-Raybould  
William Wong

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Wendy Stewart, Corporate Communications  
Mairi Welman, Corporate Communications  
Carol Ann Young, Social Policy  
MaryClare Zak, Social Policy



The Dialogues Project is grateful to renowned Musqueam artist Susan A. Point for permission to use her artwork *Salish Path* as the inspiration for the cover artwork, *Three Feathers*, by Lam Wong.

*Salish Path* is a public art work commissioned by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. The original piece that Susan created was called *Salish Footprint*. Over time, Susan's idea about the work changed and the original piece was eventually transformed into *Salish Path*. The art work, installed at the front entrance of the Museum, is meant to be a welcoming gesture to all visitors. It is in the same spirit that the Dialogues Project speaks of 'welcoming communities'.

Susan is pleased to see that her artwork inspired another artist to create a beautiful and unique image.

Clockwise from left:  
*Salish Path*, 2010, by  
 Susan Point. *Salish  
 Footprint*, 2006, by  
 Susan Point. *Salish  
 Path* installation  
 at Museum of  
 Anthropology,  
 UBC, 2009.

## List of Photographs and Photo Credits

- Page 4 View of sunset and clouds from the Musqueam Indian Reserve (1936).  
Photographer: Philip Timms. Source: Vancouver Public Library, VPL 67139.
- Page 6 Rocks in water along False Creek seawall.  
Photographer: Shawn Bishop. Source: City of Vancouver.
- Page 6 Project co-chairs Henry Yu, Susan Tatoosh and Wade Grant.  
Photographer: Dennis Rosenfeld.
- Page 9 Onlookers and drummers at a canoe race at the Mission Indian Reserve No.1 in North Vancouver, 1962.  
Photographer: Stanley Triggs. Source: Vancouver Public Library, VPL 85803F.
- Page 10 Squamish Chief George and his daughter, from the village of Senaq (what is now known as Kitsilano).  
Photo courtesy of the Squamish First Nation.
- Page 10 Portrait of Ne-kow-se-sla, the 'Legend Bearer', a Kwakiutl woman.  
Photographer: Ben W. Leeson. Source: Vancouver Public Library, VPL 71683.
- Page 10 Chinese men in front of post office at the Royal City Planing Mill. Photo taken sometime in the late 19th or early 20th century.  
Photographer: Philip Timms. Source: Vancouver Public Library, VPL 78362.
- Page 11 Tommy Moses (from the Squamish First Nation) canoeing in front of Siwash Rock near what is today known as Stanley Park.  
Photo courtesy of the Squamish First Nation.
- Page 12 Members of the Squamish First Nation in front of a church in Squamish in the 1890s.  
Photo by: Bailey Bros. Source: Vancouver Public Library, VPL 19928.
- Page 12 Coast Salish Aboriginal women and children, Vancouver, 1903.  
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- Page 12 Children in front of totem poles and houses at Alert Bay, 1924.  
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- Page 12 Small wooden houses on the Musqueam Indian reserve (1930s?).  
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- Page 12 Three children at Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, in the 1930s.  
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- Page 12 Watching television in the 1960s.  
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- Page 13 Children at a canoe race at the Mission Indian Reserve No.1 in North Vancouver, 1962.  
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- Page 14 *Through the Eye of the Raven*, a mural on the west wall of the Orwell Hotel, Vancouver.  
Source: City of Vancouver.
- Page 15 Carrall Street, Vancouver.  
Source: City of Vancouver.
- Page 16 Children cheering during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver.  
Photo courtesy of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.
- Page 17 Josiane Anthony and Nasra Mire, Youth Community Developers with the Dialogues Project.  
Photographer: Karen Fong.
- Page 17 The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul at a dialogue session at the Central Vancouver Public Library.  
Photographer: Karen Fong.
- Page 17 Coast Salish collections, Museum of Anthropology.  
Photographer: Goh Iromoto. Courtesy of Museum of Anthropology.

Page 18 Northeast False Creek seawall public art.  
Photographer: Eileen Kuettel. Source: City of Vancouver.

Page 21 Coast Salish collections, Museum of Anthropology.  
Photographer: Goh Iromoto. Courtesy of Museum of Anthropology.

Page 22 Delbert Guerin.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 23 Mural painted on the wall of the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House, Vancouver.  
Photo courtesy of Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House.

Page 24 Bing Thom.  
Photographer: Thomas Billingsley. Courtesy of Bing Thom Architects.

Page 25 Rupinder Sidhu.  
Photographer: Derek Frazer. Courtesy of Rupinder Sidhu.

Page 26 Deborah Jacobs.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 26 'Chiefs, Friends, and Elders; the Squamish people welcome you here to this land', handwritten in the Squamish language by Deborah Jacobs.

Page 27 Bing Wong.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 28 Richard Vedan.  
Photo by UBC Media Services. Courtesy of Richard Vedan.

Page 29 Steve Hanuse.  
Source: Vancouver Police Department. Courtesy of Steve Hanuse.

Page 30 Loretta Todd.  
Photographer: Keesic Douglas. Courtesy of Loretta Todd.

Page 31 Gabriel George.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 31 Chief Dan George.  
Photo courtesy of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Page 32 Totem pole carved by Nisga'a artist Robert Tait, from northern BC. The totem pole is located at Native Education College, Vancouver.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 35 Five copper domes and glazed cupolas mark the roof of the Ismaili Centre, Burnaby.  
Photographer: Gary Otte. Courtesy of the Ismaili Centre, Burnaby.

Page 36 Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 38 First Nations Longhouse, UBC.  
Photographer: Antonieta Rivera. Courtesy of First Nations House of Learning, UBC.

Page 39 Lion statue at the Millennium Gate in Chinatown, Vancouver.  
Source: City of Vancouver.

Page 39 Coast Salish collections, Museum of Anthropology.  
Photographer: Goh Iromoto. Courtesy of Museum of Anthropology.

Page 39 Richard T. Lee in front of old farmhouse at Musqueam.  
Photo courtesy of Richard T. Lee.

Page 40 Guides from Takaya Tours lead the forest walk along Burrard Inlet.  
Photographer: Karen Fong.

Page 40 Takaya means 'wolf' in the language of the Tsleil-Watututh Nation.  
Photo courtesy of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Page 40 Tsleil-Waututh community members.  
Photographer: Kari Chambers. Courtesy of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Page 40 A winter view of the Ismaili Centre, Burnaby.  
Photographer: Gary Otte. Courtesy of the Ismaili Centre, Burnaby.

Page 41 Native Education College, Vancouver.  
Photo credit: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 41 Bus from the youth bus tour exchange with various organizations.  
Photographer: Lanny Libby.

Page 41 Youth learn photography basics for the photovoice project.  
Photo courtesy of Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 41 Artwork from the collection *In Honour of Our Grandmothers* by artists, Linda Dayan Frimer and George Littlechild. Courtesy of Linda Dayan Frimer.

Page 42 Urban Native Youth Association, Vancouver.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 42 *Contemplate*, 2011 by Shya-fen Tsai. This painting by Shya-fen, who immigrated to Canada from Taiwan, was inspired by the Dialogues Project and the artist's own indigenous ancestry.  
Courtesy of Shya-fen Tsai.

Page 43 Millennium Gate, Chinatown, Vancouver.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 44 In front of the Musqueam band office.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 45 Monument from the Chinatown Memorial on Keefer Street, Chinatown, Vancouver.  
Photographer: Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 46 Tseil-Waututh community members canoeing during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver.  
Photo courtesy of the Tseil-Waututh Nation.

Page 47 Museum of Anthropology, UBC.  
Photographer: Goh Iromoto. Courtesy of Museum of Anthropology.

Page 48 Squamish basket maker Sophie Frank in 1903.  
Photographer: T.W. Fripp. Source: Vancouver Public Library, VPL 9414.

Page 50 Coast Salish drummer at the Multicultural Seniors Festival.  
Photographer: Alanna Larsen. Courtesy of Clemencia Gomez.

Page 50 Cheyenne LaVallee, Youth Community Developer, Dialogues Project.  
Photo courtesy of Alejandro Zuluaga.

Page 50 Youth and Elders photovoice group.  
Photographer: Karen Fong.

Page 51 Aboriginal Elder, Queenie Commanda, and Youth Community Developer, Arman Zamani, practise with the camera for their photovoice project.  
Photographer: Karen Fong.

Page 54 Kwakiutl woman in cedar hat and cape standing on a rock looking out to sea. Photo taken sometime in the first decade of the 1900s.  
Photographer: Ben W. Leeson. Source: Vancouver Public Library, VPL 71682.

Page 55 Downtown waterfront, Vancouver.  
Source: Tourism Vancouver.

Page 60 *Salish Path*, 2010, by Susan Point.  
Photographer: Thomas Cannell. Courtesy of Susan Point.

Page 60 *Salish Footprint*, 2006, by Susan Point.  
Photographer: Thomas Cannell. Courtesy of Susan Point.

Page 60 *Salish Path* installation at Museum of Anthropology, UBC, 2009.  
Photographer: Leigh Rollins. Courtesy of Susan Point.

## **Dialogues Project Team**

### **Staff and Consultants**

Baldwin Wong, Project Lead  
Karen Fong, Project Coordinator  
Lanny Libby, Youth Engagement  
Kamala Todd, Consultant  
Zool Suleman, Consultant  
Yasmin Kapadia, Administration

### **Youth Community Developers**

Nasra Mire  
Jorge Salazar  
Herb Varley  
Heather Forbes  
Sade Scott  
Cameron Parnell  
Cheyenne LaVallee  
Arman Zamani  
Josiane Anthony  
Margaret Joseph  
Ambrose Williams  
Kevin Abrahams  
Brad Sparrow

## **Contact**

Social Policy  
City of Vancouver  
111 West Hastings Street, 5th floor  
Vancouver, BC V6B 1H4  
Phone: 3-1-1  
Fax: 604-871-6048  
[www.vancouver.ca/dialoguesproject](http://www.vancouver.ca/dialoguesproject)



“It is in this experience of variation and detail that much of the strength of the Dialogues Project lies. People have had the chance to directly experience each other’s circumstances and understand the complexity of the forces that have shaped them, and that is a very valuable foundation upon which to build further, lasting relationships.”

Professor Linc Kesler  
Director, UBC First Nations House of Learning

As part of the Vancouver Dialogues Project, Kamala Todd produced a video that is layered with highlights of the project and the thoughtful insights of cultural leaders from Aboriginal and newcomer communities who remind us why dialogue is so important. The video documents the people, events and unique approaches of this innovative community-based project over sixteen months of the process. Set amid the stunning setting of Vancouver Coast Salish traditional territory, the video conveys the landscape of stories which can enrich all who will listen and share, and move forward together in unity.

For more information about the video, please see  
[www.vancouver.ca/dialoguesproject](http://www.vancouver.ca/dialoguesproject)

Between January 2010 and July 2011 the City of Vancouver and community partners convened a project called 'Dialogues between First Nations, Urban Aboriginal and Immigrant Communities in Vancouver'. The project aimed to increase understanding and strengthen relations among the city's Aboriginal and newcomer/non-Aboriginal communities.

More than two thousand people participated in the process, which included Dialogue Circles, Cultural Exchange visits, Elder and youth conversations, a web survey, a literature scan, a Photovoice project, and interviews. Common themes emerged from this community-based participatory process. This book records the journey and its findings. It represents a first step in a continuing process of dialogues.

By supporting community alliances the Dialogues Project worked towards building stronger social cohesion and community engagement, and a welcoming and inclusive Vancouver for all.



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