



beyond BOLLYWOOD

INDIAN AMERICANS SHAPE THE NATION

A traveling exhibition created by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center
and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

A FACILITATED
DIALOGUE
toolkit



Smithsonian

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beyond bollywood

A FACILITATED DIALOGUE TOOLKIT

Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation depicts the history of Indian Americans and their contributions to the United States from the 1700s to the present. Created by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), **Beyond Bollywood** features Indian Americans' migration experiences, working lives, political struggles, and cultural and religious contributions.

Through facilitated dialogue programs, host sites for **Beyond Bollywood** can tap the power of the exhibition to open new conversations about the often difficult subjects of immigration, identity, race, and social justice.

This exhibition learning toolkit is rooted in methodology utilized by members of the **International Coalition of Sites of Conscience**, a worldwide network of more than 200 places of memory dedicated to remembering past struggles for justice and addressing their contemporary legacies. Aiming to move visitors beyond passive learning, Sites of Conscience use facilitated dialogue as an interpretive strategy to enable visitors to better access larger historical and humanities themes within their exhibits, tours, programs, and social media.

This toolkit provides basic grounding in the methodology behind facilitated dialogue, including the crafting of evocative questions, the use of appropriate dialogue techniques, and suggested facilitator responses. Additionally, there are three program models. Two (one designed for adults and one for middle school students) are intended for use as participants are viewing the exhibition; and a third is intended for use in a separate area after the exhibition has been viewed. The toolkit also contains evaluation tools to help each host site examine programmatic success.

Through facilitated dialogue, host sites can tap the power of the exhibition to open new conversations.



PHOTO Ghosh Family, 1970.
Courtesy Ali Akbar Khan Foundation.





WHAT IS dialogue?

Dialogue stems from the Greek words “dia” and “logos,” or “through words.” It is a mode of communication which invites people with varied experiences and often differing perspectives to engage in an open-ended conversation toward the express goal of personal and collective learning. It requires participants to move beyond surface assumptions that inform their beliefs and actions and keep an open mind, suspending their judgment of the opinions of others.

Dialogue acknowledges that there are different “ways of knowing” about any given subject. It grants equal value to the insights drawn from personal experience and the knowledge gained from study. Dialogue assumes that it is possible for two markedly different perspectives to coexist at the same time.

The process of dialogue requires participants to establish and nurture a culture of mutual trust and openness. Facilitated dialogue refers to a process “led” by a neutral facilitator. Facilitators use a combination of questions, techniques, activities and ground rules to ensure that all participants can communicate with safety and integrity. Because dialogue is a non-hierarchical mode of communication, facilitators also uphold equality among all participants.

The process of dialogue requires participants to establish, protect, and maintain a culture of mutual trust.



dialogue vs. other modes of communication

- Conversation** Sharing information and ideas in order to *express one’s views without any intended impact on the listener.*
- Discussion** Sharing information and ideas in order to *accomplish a specific task*
- Debate** Sharing information and ideas in an effort to *bring others into agreement or alignment* with one’s position or belief
- Dialogue** Sharing ideas, information, experiences, and assumptions for the *purposes of personal and collective learning*

© Tammy Bormann & David Camp



THE facilitator

The facilitator is essential to helping participants engage with the topic and each other in a productive way. Facilitators use the content of **Beyond Bollywood** along with questions, techniques, and activities to allow the group to better explore issues of immigration, identity, race, and social justice.

Facilitators are charged with many responsibilities.

- Maintain group safety by setting the proper tone for dialogue and promoting an environment which encourages openness and suspends judgment.
- Create and sustain a spirit of inquiry in the group.
- Identify conflict and lead the group through it.
- Facilitate dialogue without imposing their own beliefs or perspectives.
- Remain flexible and allow a natural dynamic to occur within the group.
- Ensure equality within the group and break down hierarchies.
- Ask probing questions to encourage deeper individual exploration and the identification of larger truths.
- Synthesize the main ideas that emerge during the dialogue.



who makes a good facilitator?

Facilitators can be found amongst your staff, board, volunteers or community stakeholders. When considering who could make the strongest facilitators, look for people who:

- Give equal value to emotional, intellectual, and spiritual ways of knowing
- Exhibit a natural spirit of inquiry or curiosity
- Listen intently while reserving judgment
- Are aware and reflective about their own identity/identities
- Have organized but flexible ways of working and thinking
- Show patience with diverse learning processes and learners
- Hold themselves and others accountable for behaviors and attitudes
- Are aware of their body language and exhibit a non-defensive posture



PHOTO Jain scholar Virchand Gandhi, Buddhist teacher Anagarika Dharmapala, and Hindu monk Swami Vivekananda at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893. *Courtesy of Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Massachusetts.*



beyond bollywood DIALOGUE

The program models for this toolkit are carefully designed to be facilitated around an “arc of dialogue.” Developed by Tammy Bormann and David Campt, the arc of dialogue structure pairs a common experience shared by all participants (in this case, the **Beyond Bollywood** exhibition) with a sequence of questions designed to build trust and communication, allowing participants to interact with the exhibit themes in more relevant and personal ways.

A facilitated dialogue can occur either after a shared experience (for example, a visit to the exhibition), OR dialogue questions can be asked throughout the shared experience at appropriate moments.

Arcs are structured around four phases: community building, sharing our own experience, exploring beyond our own experience, and synthesizing/bringing closure.

PHASE 1

PHASE ONE: COMMUNITY BUILDING

Phase One encourages connectedness and relationship-building within the group. The work done here underpins the successful creation of a safe space where all participants can engage. Phase One is comprised of four parts: introducing the role of the facilitator, explaining the intent of the dialogue, establishing guidelines, and hearing all the voices in the room.

A facilitator takes several key steps to begin.

- Welcomes the participants, introduces him/herself and his/her role within the host museum/organization and explains his/her role as facilitator, emphasizing that he/she is not an expert on the exhibition content, but has been charged with helping everyone find his/her place in the conversation.
- Explains the purpose of the dialogue by emphasizing that the goal is to arrive at a fresh meaning about a particular topic by hearing from and engaging with each other.



Sample Phase One Questions

1. When people ask you where you are from, what do you tell them and why do you respond this way?
2. Choose five words that you would use to describe yourself.
3. When you consider the word “justice,” what comes immediately to mind?

Phase One questions are nonthreatening, allowing participants to share about themselves.

- Explains that in order to make the dialogue as productive as possible, the group should agree upon and establish some guidelines for the dialogue. If time does not allow for the group to generate its own guidelines, the facilitator can suggest guidelines that the group can consider using, for example:
 - Listen fully and respectfully
 - Make space for all voices to be heard
 - Seek first to understand—ask questions to clarify, not to debate
 - Stay open: we are all free to change our mind
 - Speak for yourself, not as the representative of any group
 - Make an effort to suspend your own judgment as you listen to others
 - Encourage participation from all the voices in the room by asking all participants to introduce themselves and respond to the same Phase One question

Phase One questions are nonthreatening and allow participants to share information about themselves. They require only a participant's personal experience to answer.

Getting all the voices in the room does not necessarily mean that every participant must always speak. Facilitators can consider using small group introductions or written techniques such as a “graffiti wall” or indexed thoughts, both of which are described herein.



PHOTO Dalip Singh Saund, first Indian American and first Asian American elected to the U.S. Congress, stands with then-Senators John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, 1958. *Courtesy Eric Saund.*

**PHASE
2**

PHASE TWO: SHARING OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

Phase Two invites participants to think about their own experiences related to the topic and share these experiences with the group. The facilitator helps participants recognize how their experiences are similar and different and why they may be that way.

Questions in Phase Two welcome each person's experience equally and place minimal judgment on responses, gathering more information than questions in Phase One.

Phase Two invites participants to think about their own experiences.



Sample Phase Two Questions

1. What impact does immigration have on your daily life?
2. How did you first come to understand race?
3. Can you remember the first time you experienced or learned about "injustice?"

Questions in Phase Two encourage the group to share both similar and differing experiences. Facilitators should ask follow-up questions, encouraging participants to compare and contrast.

Sample Phase Two Follow-up Questions

1. What differences do you notice in the ways that you've experienced this topic?
2. How was your personal experience different from others in the group?
3. How was your personal experience similar to others in the group?

**PHASE
3**

**PHASE THREE: EXPLORING BEYOND
OUR OWN EXPERIENCES**

Phase Three questions explore the topic beyond personal experiences, to view topics from the perspective of others. Until this point, participants speak primarily from their own experience. Phase Three questions provoke participants to dig deeper into their assumptions and to actively consider the underlying social conditions that inform a person's perspective.



**Sample Phase Three
Questions**

1. Do you think all Americans have equal access to a “just” legal system? In your opinion, who does? Who does not? Are there larger social realities that shape these differences?
2. Who do you think should be welcome to immigrate to the United States today? Should everyone be allowed to immigrate here? What kinds of values inform your response to these questions?

In Phase Three, facilitators should be particularly focused on helping participants to explore people's assumptions about the topic, encouraging them to examine why people believe as they do.

**Sample Phase Three
Probing Questions**

1. Tell me more about that.
2. How did you come to feel this way?
3. What are the assumptions you make when you think about this topic?

**Phase Three
questions
provoke
participants
to dig deeper.**



PHOTO An Indian immigrant worker harvests beets in Hamilton City, California, for the Sacramento Valley Sugar Company, c. 1907–1915. *California State University, Chico, Meriam Library Special Collections.*

PHASE
4

PHASE FOUR: SYNTHESIZING AND CLOSING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

After a dialogue that discusses differences as well as similarities in viewpoint between participants, it is important to close a dialogue by developing a sense of community among the participants. Phase Four questions help participants examine what they have learned about themselves and each other and share the impact that the dialogue has had on them.

Facilitators are not working toward resolution or agreement. Some participants will actively seek this agreement. In these instances, facilitators should work to remind participants that the goal of this dialogue is to deepen personal and collective learning, not necessarily to encourage compromise or accomplish a specific task.



PHOTO Maestro Ali Akbar Khan performing at Esalen, Big Sur, California, c. 1967. Photograph by Jan and Herb Steward. Courtesy of the Ali Akbar Khan Foundation.

Phase Four questions will help participants examine and share what they have learned.



Sample Phase Four Questions

1. What, if anything, did you hear in this conversation that questioned your assumptions? What, if anything, did you hear that affirmed your assumptions?
2. Are there things you heard today that you want to understand better?
3. What have you heard that inspires you to act more on this issue?
4. If you could share this program with anyone in your life, who would you share it with?



build a better arc

DEVELOPING GOOD QUESTIONS

Developing good questions is vital to the success of facilitated dialogue programs.

By asking the questions in an open way, facilitators can elicit participant response; a negative tone or pointed question can just as easily shut participants down. By understanding the development of questions as an art, a facilitator can increase participant engagement and help participants learn this skill themselves.

Questions take different forms and serve different functions.

Factual questions have only one correct answer.

Interpretive questions often have more than one answer, which are ideally supported with evidence. Depending on their personal interpretations, people can have different, equally valid answers.

Dialogic questions have no right or wrong answer because they ask for opinion, belief, or knowledge based only on personal experience. They are rooted in the present and often touch on universal concepts and values.

By asking questions in an open way, facilitators can elicit responses.

FACTUAL	INTERPRETIVE	DIALOGIC
When was Rudyard Kipling's <i>The Jungle Book</i> published?	How did Rudyard Kipling's <i>The Jungle Book</i> shape Americans' image of Indian Americans?	What troubles you most about society's perception of Indian Americans? What do you find most reassuring?
In the early 20th century, what percentage of Indian immigrants married individuals who did not define themselves as Indian American?	What has motivated Indian immigrants to marry other immigrants and racial minorities?	What factors are important to you when choosing a life partner?



FACILITATION techniques

Pair Share or Small Groups

Because some participants may be hesitant to share or speak before a large group, dividing participants into smaller groups or pairs may encourage stronger involvement. This also can save a facilitator time, allowing multiple people to answer a given question simultaneously. When bringing pairs and small groups back together, facilitators should offer the opportunity for groups to share what they discussed, allowing participants who were not part of a given group to learn from their conversations.

Serial Testimony

Serial testimony is particularly useful in scenarios where one or more participants are dominating the conversation. Serial testimony is a structured technique in which the facilitator establishes a time limit for each participant to answer a question. As each person speaks, the group is invited to listen silently without asking questions. If a participant does not fill their time, the group is invited to maintain the silence so as to allow for reflection and processing.

Quotes

This technique invites participants to consider multiple perspectives on an issue by using a series of attributed quotes related to the topic. The facilitator hangs the quotes, typically five or six, around the dialogue space and asks participants to read all of them, silently. After reading all of the quotes, participants are instructed to stand near the quote that they would like to speak about. Participants are then encouraged to discuss why they chose that quote within their small group.



PHOTO Sabu Dastagir, right, an actor of Indian origin, starred in the film adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book." 1942. *Alexander Korda Films-United Artists.*

Forced Voting

Facilitators write a series of statements related to a given topic or issue on individual sheets of paper. Participants are instructed to read all of the statements in silence and then to “vote” their agreement or disagreement by placing a red or green dot on each sheet. After all participants have voted on all statements, the facilitator tabulates the results and shares them with the participants, inviting reactions and comments from the group.

Carpet of Ideas

In carpet of ideas, a facilitator hands a large index card to each member of the group and then asks a question. After a time of silent reflection, the facilitator asks each group member to write his/her response in large print on the index card, but not to write his/her name. The facilitator instructs participants that though responses will be shared with the group, no response will be attributed to any one person. The facilitator should collect the completed cards and place them on the floor, inviting the participants to circle around them to read and reflect on everyone’s responses.

Indexed Thoughts

Similar to carpet of ideas, indexed thoughts invites participants to hold and share their written silent reflection with the rest of the group rather than anonymously submit it to the facilitator.

Mutual Invitation

In mutual invitation, one participant invites the next to speak. If the person who has been invited to speak is not prepared to do so, he or she may “pass” the invitation to someone else with the knowledge that the group will return to her/him. The mutual invitation process enhances the participants’ sense that they collectively own the dialogue and is an effective technique to utilize when participants may not be responding well to a particular facilitator.

Graffiti Wall and Gallery Walk

In graffiti wall, the facilitator hangs a large piece of paper on the wall of the dialogue space and writes a word, phrase, or a question. Participants are invited to write or draw their responses on the paper all at the same time. When all participants have had a chance to place their responses on the wall, the facilitator invites the group to walk silently past the graffiti wall so as to read and process what others have written/drawn.



PHOTO Bollywood Dancers from Arpana Dance Company, Irvine, California, 2010. *Photograph by John Merrell.*



troubleshooting: WHAT TO DO IF...

Sharing authority with visitors and creating space for them to engage with each other and with the content of **Beyond Bollywood** might lead to new interpretive challenges. Some of those challenges are listed below along with suggested facilitator responses, group guidelines, and techniques to address them.

...one person dominates the discussion?

Remind the group that everyone is invited to participate.

You might say, “I hear your passion around this and I would like to make sure that others in the group can share their perspectives as well.”

Ask the group, “Do we need to modify our ground rules to make sure everyone has a chance to speak?”

Appropriate techniques: Serial Testimony, Small Groups, Carpet of Ideas

Helpful ground rules: Be aware of the air: “Make space for all voices to be heard”; or “Exercise W.A.I.T.—Before speaking, ask yourself, “Why am I talking?”

...participants can't shift from debate to dialogue?

Remind the group that the purpose of the dialogue is not to debate or convince one another of our “rightness.”

Say, “Everyone here has a different kind of expertise or knowledge about (insert topic). While you may want to share your perspective with us, I invite you to first hear from others so that we might deepen our collective understanding.”

Or, “Are there additional ways of looking at this issue that anyone would like to explore?”

Appropriate techniques: Small Groups, Serial Testimony, Quotes

Helpful ground rules: “Seek first to understand—ask questions to clarify, not to debate”; “Stay open: we are all free to change our mind”; or “Make an effort to suspend your own judgment as you listen to others.”

...a participant puts forth information that you know is false?

First, ask yourself if it is vital to correct the information. Be aware and conscious of your own biases and need to “fix” beliefs that don't match your own.

Ask, “Has anyone else heard other information about this?” If no one offers a correction, you might raise one.

Often participants get hung up in a dispute about facts, but no one knows the answer. Remind the group that experts often disagree and redirect the dialogue with a question.

...no one wants to talk!

Stop talking! You may be filling too much space.

Ask participants to talk about a particular point within a small group and then bring everyone together again.

Is the group in supposed agreement? Try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one in the group holds them. You might say, “Do you know people who hold other views? What would they say about our conversation?”

Appropriate techniques: Mutual Invitation, Carpet of Ideas, Indexed Thoughts

Helpful ground rules: “We share responsibility for making the conversation productive.”

...conflict erupts between participants?

Remind participants that airing different ideas is why they’ve come together; however, for the dialogue to continue to be productive, it must be focused on the issue.

It is OK to challenge the impact someone’s comments have in the room, but attacking a person’s character is unacceptable.

Invite others into the conversation if conflict is escalating between two people. “Would someone else like to offer an opinion?”

Appropriate techniques: Serial Testimony, Small Groups, Carpet of Ideas

Helpful ground rules: “Listen fully and respectfully”; “Be willing to hear divergent views”; “Avoid assigning intentions or motives to others”; or “Make an effort to suspend your own judgment as you listen to others.”

...while facilitating, I am struggling with a topic or something said by a participant?

Have two or three short, non-confrontational phrases in your pocket that you can use to buy yourself time, e.g. “Tell me more,” or “Does anyone else feel similarly?”

If you know a topic poses challenges for you, co-facilitate. Review your “trigger” issues with your colleague beforehand and decide on a physical cue that will help you signify to your co-facilitator that you need to step back.

Appropriate techniques: Silent Reflection, Carpet of Ideas, Indexed Thoughts

**Make
space
for all
voices
to be
heard.**



PHOTO Indian immigrants work on railway construction, Pacific and Eastern Railroad, Oregon, c. 1906. *Courtesy Southern Oregon Historical Society.*



beyond bollywood PROGRAM MODEL 1

Civic Engagement and Social Justice

In-Gallery Dialogue, adults (1-1.5 hours)

Guidelines

1. Our social identity and social “status” result in different life experiences.
2. Exercise W.A.I.T.—Before speaking, ask yourself, “Why am I talking?”
3. Take individual responsibility by using “I” statements.

This program model is intended for use while leading a group through the **Beyond Bollywood** exhibition. Rather than using all the model questions suggested here in each phase, facilitators may select questions which respond to the evolving conversation of the group they are guiding in dialogue.

PHASE
1

COMMUNITY BUILDING

PANEL: The First Immigrants. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, while India was a British colony, Indians began to emigrate to escape conditions at home. Oppressed by taxation and restrictions on land ownership, farmers left the Punjab to settle along America’s West Coast. They worked alongside Chinese immigrants in lumber mills and iron factories, and on railroads to support the nation’s industrial boom.

PANEL: The Great Melting Pot. In the early 20th century, America experienced a “boom” of industry and needed laborers for manual work. While promoting the immigration of men to fill the labor void, the U.S. government discouraged the immigration of women out of fear that families would form and establish permanent roots in the country.

- **Find a picture on your phone that you think represents community and share it with your partner.**

After five minutes in pairs, bring the group back together and ask if anyone would like to share something that came up in their pair. If participants don’t have a phone accessible, ask them to describe the picture they would show.

PHASE
2

SHARING OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

PANEL: Freedom Here and There. Between 1900 and 1950, Indians fought for freedom from British rule, just as Indian immigrants in America were fighting for citizenship. Early immigrants connected the two struggles. They reasoned that as long as India was a British colony, Indians in America would be treated as *coolies*, or manual laborers, without dignity and rights. These campaigners believed that victories on both continents would ensure dignity for future generations and the inalienable rights outlined in America's Declaration of Independence.

PANEL: Freedom Here and There. The India Lobby united Indians of various classes and religions across America to fight for citizenship, beginning in the 1920s. They built coalitions with African Americans, Filipinos, and organized labor. The India Lobby was instrumental in passing the landmark 1946 Luce-Cellar Act, granting Indians and Filipinos the rights to U.S. citizenship and land ownership.

PANEL: Who Belongs in America? In 1987, a hate group called the Dotbusters vandalized property and attacked Indian Americans in Jersey City, New Jersey. Their motivation: growing economic inequality, which they blamed on Indian residents. In response, Indian Youth Against Racism, a group from Columbia University, documented the violence and created programs on South Asian cultures for Jersey City Schools.

- What issues does your community face today?
- What do you think your community may be unwilling to address?
- When did you first understand injustice? What did you learn?
- Who do you think may be treated unjustly in your community?
- Share a story of a collective social action, or group action toward a specific goal, you were a part of or witnessed.

PHASE
3

EXPLORING BEYOND OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

PANEL: *Desis*, Divided We Fall. Many *Desis* (people who trace their roots to South Asia) fight against racial inequality, organize for women's rights and LGBT rights, and denounce domestic violence. Involvement in these causes highlights the internal complexities that many Indian Americans face as they struggle for acceptance, not only within mainstream America, but also within Indian American communities.



PHOTO Rapper and writer Chee Malabar. Courtesy Preston Merchant.

In 2000, the South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association (SALGA) pushed the debate over rights for lesbian and gay persons front and center, fighting for and eventually gaining inclusion in New York's India Day Parade as equal members of the *desi* community.

PANEL: Hip-Hop Activism. Hip-hop has become an important form of cultural expression for many Americans, including *desis*. The musical genre was created in the 1970s by African Americans as a tool of power, protest, and personal expression. *Desi* artists have embraced the energy of the hip-hop movement to create and perform music that is simultaneously art and activism.

- Do you think America is fulfilling its promise of justice for all?
- What is the role of community in achieving social justice?
- When do you choose to get involved in these or other social issues?
- Does your community encourage social action?
- Do you think there is injustice in America?
- Do you think people's economic circumstances influence their choices around these issues?

PHASE
4

SYNTHESIZING AND CLOSING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

PANEL: Working Lives, Cab Drivers. Gujarat-born and U.S. educated, Bhairavi Desai is a founding member and director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, a union that represents some 15,000 cab drivers. On May 13, 1998, the NYTWA launched a daring and ultimately successful strike to protest unfair work regulations, the first taxi strike in New York in 30 years.

- Do you think people should get engaged on these issues?
- How do you think more people can get engaged in their community?
- What do you think is our most powerful tool in promoting social justice?
- What unique talent or ability might you use in furthering social justice?



PHOTO Columbia University students formed the group Indian Youth Against Racism, in response to attacks on Indian Americans in Jersey City, New Jersey, 1987.

Photograph by Corky Lee.





beyond bollywood

PROGRAM MODEL 2

Fighting For Belonging, Fighting For Citizenship

In-Gallery Dialogue, targeted to 6th–8th grades (1–1.5 hours)

Guidelines

1. Speak for yourself, not as the representative of any group. Remember that others are speaking for themselves, too.
2. Make space for all voices to be heard.
3. Our social identity and social “status” result in different life experiences.

This program model is intended for use while leading a group through the **Beyond Bollywood** exhibition. Rather than using all the model questions suggested here in each phase, facilitators may select questions which respond to the evolving conversation of the group they are guiding in dialogue.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

PANEL: Passages. The Indian American story is rooted in migration. Some arrived in the late 1800s, joining other immigrants who came to build, and find, the American Dream. Others came in the 1960s, arriving at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, and helped shape a “new” America.

Most Indian immigrants came with just one trunk or suitcase containing some clothing and a few items to remind them of home. Many left their families behind to make the 10,000-mile journey, with only hope for new and better opportunities in an unknown place.

PANEL: The First Immigrants. “On arriving in the Sacramento Valley, one could not help but be reminded of the Punjab. Fertile fields stretched across the flat valley to the foothills lying far in the distance.” —Puna Singh, *farmer*

- Where do you feel most accepted?
- What is a community you belong to?
- Where do you feel at home?
- What does “home” look like?
- What word comes to mind when you hear the phrase “American Dream?”



PHOTO Wearing garlands presented by family members, an Indian man prepares to depart for the United States, 1965. *Courtesy of Hemendra and Hansa Momaya.*

PHASE
2

SHARING OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

PANEL: *Desis*, United We Stand. The word *desi* (from the Sanskrit *desa*, meaning “country”) refers to people who trace their roots to South Asia. Many Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Sri Lankans count themselves as *desis*.

In America, the word does not just designate ancestry. For some *desis*, it is a collective identity, binding people into a community that questions stereotypes and fights for human rights, including rights for immigrants and workers.

PANEL: Who Belongs in America. “Belonging does not come without a fight.”
—Professor Vijay Prashad, *historian and journalist*

- How does this quote resonate with your experience?
- How does your community welcome or shut out others?
- What do you think you have to do or let go of to belong in America?
- Tell us about a time you felt included or excluded. (Use small groups)
- Share with the group an instance where you actively chose to identify with a community.

PHASE
3

EXPLORING BEYOND OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

PANEL: Who Gets to Be a Citizen? Until the middle of the 20th century, U.S. laws effectively prevented Asian immigrants from becoming citizens. Only “white” immigrants could become Americans. Since anthropologists at the time classified people with origins in northern India as Caucasian, some Indian immigrants argued that they were eligible to become citizens.

Bhagat Singh Thind, a devout Sikh and U.S. Army veteran, was twice granted citizenship by the state of Washington, in 1918 and again in 1920. Both times, the Bureau of Naturalization revoked his citizenship, and his case proceeded to the U.S. Supreme Court. In a 1923 ruling, the Court rejected Thind’s claim, on the grounds that, although technically “Caucasian,” Indians did not belong to “the various groups of persons in this country commonly recognized as ‘white.’”

PANEL: Working Lives, Doctors and Dentists. In the 1960s, the U.S. needed more doctors for its new Medicare system. A 1965 immigration law opened the door to people with medical training. Fresh graduates from India’s medical schools answered the call.

Upon arrival, some doctors and dentists prospered, while others faced hiring barriers and limited professional privileges because of their nationality. Many found work in poor rural or urban communities. Today, Indian American doctors are a familiar sight in hospitals, clinics, and medical offices across the country.

- Do you think our laws encourage or discourage inclusion/exclusion? How?
- Do you think you can belong socially if you don’t belong legally?
- What ideas/values do you believe should drive immigration policy today?
- Who do you think should be allowed to become a citizen?

SYNTHESIZING AND CLOSING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

PANEL: Who Gets to Be a Citizen? Thind went on to complete his Ph.D. at University of California, Berkeley and became a well-known lecturer in metaphysics. Drawing his lessons from a wide range of intellectual and spiritual traditions including Sikh philosophy and the works of Emerson and Thoreau, Thind challenged his audiences' understandings of religion and reality. He wrote, "You must never be limited by external authority, whether it be vested in a church, man, or book. It is your right to question, challenge, and investigate."

In 1936, Thind was granted U.S. citizenship through the state of New York.

PANEL: Ground Breakers. Representing the United States in the Olympics, winning an NFL championship, and being crowned Miss America could be considered quintessential "American" achievements.

Mohini Bhardwaj (born 1978): In 2004, gymnast Mohini Bhardwaj became the first Indian American woman to win an Olympic medal.

Brandon Chillar (born 1982): Brandon Chillar was part of the 2011 Green Bay Packers Super Bowl lineup, becoming the first Indian American to play for a winning National Football League championship team.

Nina Davuluri (born 1989): In 2013, Nina Davuluri of New York State was crowned Miss America, the first Indian American to hold the title.

- Who's responsible for making others feel welcome?
- Do you want to continue this conversation? If so, with whom?
- What will you question, challenge, or investigate after today?
- How do you define "American?"



PHOTO *Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM) is one of many desi groups that protest hate crimes, racial profiling, and unconstitutional detention. Photograph by Corky Lee.*



beyond bollywood PROGRAM MODEL 3

Immigration and Identity

Post-Exhibition Visit Dialogue, all ages (1-1.5 hours)

This program model is intended for use *after* a group has viewed the **Beyond Bollywood** exhibition. Rather than using all the model questions suggested here in each phase, facilitators may select questions which respond to the evolving conversation of the group they are guiding in dialogue.

Preparation

Print large copies of the following quotes and tape them to the walls of the dialogue space. Position chairs in a circle.



Ashima Ganguli stands in the kitchen...combining Rice Krispies and Planters peanuts and chopped red onion in a bowl. She adds salt, lemon juice, thin slices of green chili pepper, wishing there were mustard oil to pour into the mix. Ashima has been consuming this concoction throughout her pregnancy, a humble approximation of the snack sold...on railway platforms throughout India... it is the one thing she craves.

— from *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003)



The Mexican and the Hindu were compatible...they had a lot in common. The Mexicans had tortillas. The Hindus had rotis, a bread that is like a tortilla.

— Isabel Singh Garcia, *member of a Punjabi-Mexican American family*



Regarding Nina Davuluri's win as Miss America 2013

When many Americans start calling a 24-year-old talented beauty pageant winner a terrorist because she comes from somewhere Eastern and has 'tan' skin, we have a problem. It's an information problem. It's a fear-of-the-unknown problem.

— Dr. Reef Karim, as published in *Huffington Post* (10.22.13)

In an interview for NPR's "Morning Edition," Mindy Kaling was asked to speak to her experience as the first Asian American woman on broadcast television to star in and run her own show.



I know why people want me to speak about it, but I sort of refuse to be an outsider, even though I know that I very much look like one to a lot of people. And I refuse to view myself in such terms.

— Mindy Kaling, *Actor and Producer*



A key symbol for us is the taxi meter, which displays fares in red. A taxi worker begins each day 'in the red'—in debt—and has to drive himself 'into the black' to pay off rental or lease fees, gas, and dues to his employer. So most of a fare doesn't go to the driver's pocket.

— Bhairavi Desai, *director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance*

Guidelines

1. Make space for all voices to be heard.
2. Seek first to understand—ask questions to clarify, not to debate.
3. Speak for yourself, not as the representative of any group. Remember that others are speaking for themselves, too.

PHOTO The Sharma family, San Francisco, 1983. Courtesy Prithvi Sharma.



PHASE
1

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Share three ways that you identify yourself. (Facilitator should model a response.)
- When people ask you “where are you from,” how do you answer and why do you answer that way?
- What words or images come to mind when you hear the word “immigrant?”
- What are your first reactions to the exhibition? How did it make you feel?

PHASE
2

SHARING OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

- Where has immigration touched your life?
- How do your identities fit together? Are they ever in conflict with each other?
- What motivated you to come to this exhibition?

Introduce the “Quotes” activity (see pages 12 and 22–23 in this toolkit). After 10 to 15 minutes in small groups, bring all participants back together and ask if anyone would like to share something that came up in their small groups.

PHASE
3

EXPLORING BEYOND OUR OWN EXPERIENCES

- How does the way you identify, whether by race, gender, or religious belief influence your reactions to **Beyond Bollywood**?
- Are cultural exhibitions like **Beyond Bollywood** necessary? Does this exhibition bridge or deepen cultural divides?
- Do you think our society values all identities equally? What is media’s role in placing value on types of identities?
- Does anything trouble you about our collective response to immigration? What do you find most reassuring?

PHASE
4

SYNTHESIZING AND CLOSING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- What did you hear in this conversation that challenged/confirmed your assumptions?
- Whose perspective do you want to understand better and how will you do that?
- As you reflect on **Beyond Bollywood**, what are the values you think should guide immigration policy?

PHOTO A veteran of the U.S. Army, Bhagat Singh Thind struggled to attain citizenship status in the United States. *Courtesy of the Thind Family.*



beyond bollywood DIALOGUE

OBSERVATION FORM

This form is for facilitators to complete. Please photocopy, record results, and return to SITES , MRC 941, PO Box 37012, Washington, DC 20013-7012.

Introduction: “My name is _____. I work with the _____ (organization) and I will be observing today’s program. **Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation** was created by the Smithsonian’s Asian Pacific American Center and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. It explores the Indian American experience and the community’s political, professional, and cultural contributions to American life and history.

This dialogue is part of a national initiative to use this exhibit as a starting place for people to discuss contemporary issues surrounding immigration, race, and social justice. To this end, we’re evaluating programs like this one to see what is working and what is not. I’ll be taking notes during the discussion. I’m happy to share my observations with you after the program if you are interested. Thank you for letting me join you today.”

Date	Organization	Dialogue Program
Number in group	Observation Sheet #	Group (if applicable)

As you observe the program place a check mark in the middle column each time you observe a behavior. At the end of the program add up the total for each behavior and enter it into the third column.

TYPE OF BEHAVIOR	NUMBER OF TIMES OBSERVED	TOTAL NUMBER OF TIMES OBSERVED
Participant(s) ask questions of facilitator(s)		
Participant(s) ask questions of other guests		
Beyond introductions, participant(s) share stories		
Participant(s) talk to each other		
Participant(s) share opinions about an issue		
Participant(s) become emotional about an issue*		
Participants linger and talk with facilitator(s) after program ends		
Participants linger and talk with each other after program ends		

*After the dialogue has ended please describe what types of emotions you observed and discuss with the facilitator how well she/he handled these emotions.

After the program, meet with the facilitator and answer the questions on the reverse.

beyond bollywood DIALOGUE

VISITOR SURVEY

This section to be filled out by the facilitator. Please photocopy, distribute to visitors, and return to SITES , MRC 941, PO Box 37012, Washington, DC 20013-7012.

Survey # Today's Date (mm/dd/year) Organization

Your opinions are very important to us. Please note this survey is only about this program, not the **Beyond Bollywood** exhibition or the museum.

1) Please rate the following statements below

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
A) The facilitator made me feel comfortable expressing my opinion	1	2	3	4	5
B) The facilitator made me feel comfortable asking questions	1	2	3	4	5
C) I gained insights into different perspectives from fellow participants	1	2	3	4	5

2) If you rated any of the above items a “4” or below please tell us what we could do to make it a “5” for you.

3) For me the dialogue program was (please circle one of the numbers on the scale below):

1
2
3
4
5
6

Not Valuable
Moderately Valuable
Extremely Valuable

Please tell us why this dialogue program was or was not valuable for you:

PLEASE CONTINUE THIS SURVEY ON THE NEXT PAGE 

4) Please rate the following statements below:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
A) The dialogue program gave me an increased understanding of the history of _____ (fill in topic)	1	2	3	4	5
B) The dialogue program gave me an increased understanding of contemporary _____ (fill in topic) issues	1	2	3	4	5
C) The dialogue program helped me connect _____ (fill in topic) issues of the past to _____ (fill in topic) issues today	1	2	3	4	5
D) The dialogue program gave me an increased awareness of opportunities to engage in contemporary _____ (fill in topic) issues	1	2	3	4	5
E) I would recommend this program to others	1	2	3	4	5

5) If you rated any of the above items a “4” or below please tell us what we could do to make it a “5” for you.

6) How did you hear about the dialogue program?

If your site is interested in collecting demographic data, you should add those questions on this page.

Thank you so much for giving us your feedback.

partners

Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation was created by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. This Facilitated Dialogue Toolkit was generously supported by the Smithsonian Women's Committee.

Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center

Established in 1997, the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center is a national resource for discovering the consequence and complexity of the global Asian Pacific American experience through collaboration, exhibitions, programs, and digital experiences – and a creative leader in rethinking museums in the digital age. Discover what we do: apa.si.edu

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C. for more than 60 years. SITES connects Americans to their cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. sites.si.edu

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The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is the only worldwide network dedicated to transforming places that preserve the past into dynamic spaces that promote civic action. Through powerful programs that bring people together across difference, the Coalition is building the global movement to connect past to present, memory to action. sitesofconscience.org.



Smithsonian Institution
Traveling Exhibition Service



Smithsonian Asian
Pacific American Center



Smithsonian Women's Committee



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