

# Summary: Community Conversations - Adults

---

## 1. Aspirations – A community where you want to live

**A friendly community: friendly people who are willing to listen and help; easy to make friends and keep connected**

- Friendly to newcomers
- Friendly; inclusive – makes you more comfortable; able to meet more people and do more things
- Want community to help and find a friend. Important to find people for friendships for older people and children. Can learn anything from friends. A country good opportunity to find friends to get together. Important for community to give opportunity to find friends.
- Want a friendly, caring, and inclusive community
- Hospitable; welcoming
- Friendly most important; don't feel isolated; accepted by others; others will listen to you;
- Participation is partly worked. Friendship important.
- Themes: Friendship, connection, information-sharing.
- More connection, more integration
- Connection/integration important because then you make new friends, and learn about other cultures, and learn about other peoples
- North shore is friendly, people try to be kind, I find this useful;
- Connection is important – not just celebration!
- Friendly
- I want a community filled with love, all parts, no one hungry; persons respected, their knowledge, experience, culture; people attempt understand each other; friendly, echoes other
- Canada is exceptionally friendly, particularly with respect to attitude to ESL. Unlike in Europe, people intolerant.
- When he first arrived people were telling him how to do things, with education and community centre and library. Helped him start on knowing the community
- The help people come to Canada
- Society is adjusting behaviour – people let each other in when driving and strives to be the same. They try to model the same behaviour
- Living in peace, harmony, sharing culture
- People in Vancouver are really forgiving about fact we are not native speakers; people are understanding and make an attempt to understand us; I don't feel we are judged by people of not speaking perfectly; I don't have any problem with people's attitudes.
- Help with cleaning yards and household
- Nice people in Vancouver
- People take responsibility for their own actions
- Went to ceremony for new year – more respect and welcoming

- Sense of belonging to the community – because they can see there are people who are excited in the community
- Less feeling homeless; miss being in a community that belongs to us; ideal community we would be more felt as insiders rather than outsiders

**A Safe Place: comfortable to walk at any time of day or night; peaceful; a law obeying country**

- Safe – well lit, comfortable to walk any time of day
- Safe; I like well-lit parking lot at village centre; younger males in hoodies make me less comfortable; now can walk any time day or night
- Safe
- Safe, peaceful – peaceful for your heart. Not too busy
- Safe and security (especially for children)
- Security and safety the most important
- Neighbours say welcome and ask about schools and chatting
- Read articles about how safe community was before coming here
- A law obeying country
- The laws and government are very important for people
- One community for Iranians at Silverharbour

**Equal society where people are free to talk and share opinions**

- Can talk, give opinion, offer something to society
- Community where you are listened to, talk easily, participate, \*convenient\* to do these things
- Equal community where all peoples voices can be heard; from all stages and classes of life; community that makes it easy for these diff groups to start speaking, and, have their voices heard; e.g., this community conversation private forum to share ideas very good;
- I spent a long time with multicultural society and this society doing a great job of addressing values mentioned above. They invite people from diverse backgrounds to be heard. Not sure how much this participating will affect decisions but I think it is very nice to be heard.

**A community with diverse population and culture: have opportunities to know other cultures and to integrate with other culture in the community**

- Lots of cultural diversity
- I want to be offered activities mix of immigrants and Canadians; present discussion, we're all from same country; we want opportunity to mix communities, especially Canadians, want to improve English, and get to know Canadians better, their culture, plus, we want Canadians to know us better; participating in each other's cultural events and mixing together
- All the good things from different cultures in one package so people can share
- More of a mosaic, melting into each other

- People help each other and able to practice their culture and to be able to integrate with other cultures in the community
- I see immigrants in their own community – more of a sense of multicultural
- Downtown is more multicultural – in Pacific Centre there are different cultures. Park Royal is mostly Persians and Chinese
- It's nice to be with community, I see all the Persian shops around me, the Multicultural is close to where I live
- I think it's normal for cultures to get together for safety and community
- When I moved here, there were no Iranians, and I had no choice but to learn French and talk to my neighbours, to get a job - Now we have the community that gives you the support
- Children learn a wider span of culture – though in China you learn the Chinese culture well but not so broad
- Cultural diversity
- Important to know the culture.
- Opportunities to know each other and learn about other cultures
- Used English in the company they came from in their other country
- Cultural is very different
- Others from the culture close by
- Cultural with no smoking and other habits
- Cultural environment – the government is tolerant

#### **A community with family members or people from same ethnic community**

- Chose to be here because daughters here
- Chose to be here because sons here
- Other Iranians live in the community
- Connection to people from own country
- Here with children and family

#### **A community with various information, services and programs for new comers, i.e. settlement services and language services**

- Newcomer as 7 months. Fortunately found NSMS and found a lot about Canada related with principle with daughter and ranking of schools in Canada. Found a lot of answers for newcomer questions at NSMS. NSMS helped with forms such as pharma care.
- Why above important? Important because came during strike of school and couldn't make sense of it. Then found support via SWIS and NSMS who explained a lot of information about schools here and in Canada. First month – surprised her daughter didn't have any homework. This club like Club Café is very helpful. Had no information in this area and passed classes at NSMS where they taught her how to right resume/cv and interview process. NSMS has been an important part of community.

- Providing information for newcomers
- Sometimes need more information. Would like to do more in NV but finds difficulty in opening doors and encourage herself. When came here had to be very quiet. Courage to engage and participate.
- Overall: figuring out systems is so much to navigate and learn. Kind of community is understandable.
- Difference of where people are coming from – what are main differences in providing information for different people. Lots of NSMS workshops but very important difference depending where they come from. Things like banking, taxing, mortgages, buy/lease car – these are very different here compared to back home – all this info is very important including sharing of info and success stories that could be helpful to others.
- Overall: share information, connected to networks to share
- Wants English classes for newcomers
- Wants regular sessions for sharing information helpful to Persian community, e.g., news, new regulations related to immigrants, some fun or parties on a regular basis
- Information about health care; any information of services for immigrants; information sessions please; sessions to make aware of services, and, facilities
- In particular tax information useful; and where art classes available
- Would like to learn English; very nice community; this library I see many groups of people planning or exercising – I would like to know more English so I can join them and participate; people get together and explain about life or interesting subjects like books/lectures
- Communication is important – we learn from it; the library facilitates a lot of that
- Wants English classes
- English classes
- English classes hours at silver harbour limited; more classes at more various times please
- Likes English classes to learn – English as a first language
- Likes to learn from classes as his speaking is difficult
- Easy to settle down here – felt there was lots of support
- Banking difficult, finding out about health care difficult, government rolls, all aspects Canadian services, law, politics, need discussions and YOGA

**A community with various recreation facilities and activities: community centres, sports, outdoor activities, and yoga classes**

- The community Centre has a pool and workout gym. Most of my friends go every day till closed. There's nothing else to do. Compared to downtown, there's a cinema, a gym, a hookah place, a good sushi place. That's why everyone goes to downtown. But West Van is just one community centre. North Van is just Persian shops and that's it. Richmond is Chinese food and shops, and that's it. And that's why they don't engage with each other.
- More active life
- Community centre as a cultural group; not waiting for mission, or wait for room for community

event; want own Iranian community centre, access to room at all times.

- The village is a Hub for people – recreation centre, youth centre, we need this more – don't have one in Deep Cove and we need one there; it pulls us together
- More people traffic, more activities
- More alive
- Then I feel like I'm living in a city – more like where I come from
- Sport classes for seniors.
- Group outdoor activities together desired
- Wants yoga classes
- Yoga
- Saturday classes: yoga classes, dance classes, singing classes, seniors like these. Seniors very happy with these classes; can community please subsidize these classes?
- Silverharbour Saturday events very much appreciated but: consistent and cheaper or free please
- Likes to read novels – libraries are great places to get help for level of book you would need. It is very helpful for me
- The libraries here are better than in China. They have old books. The library here is very welcoming here.
- Has being a parent made it easier to make Canadian friends – yes. I only see them at school. The parents work and seem to be busy.
- Help from community centers

#### **A community with good transportation services and system**

- Community with a good transportation system
- Transportation – Seymour bus for seniors helps
- Driving is safe - cars stop and watch for pedestrians

#### **A community with good education system, especially for children**

- Core was to have education for daughter because in Korea very difficult and stressful. Wanted daughter to be free from educational stress. Felt succeeded in education because daughter is satisfied. Happy but had to give up friends/family/co-workers back home, but now happy and satisfied.
- First – is for children. Children don't want to go back. Existing networks of family helped a lot, but if no network of family then very difficult. Duty to find home, car, etc is one's duty.
- Schools have international high school and good standards
- Good government and teaching the children to know about voting
- Know government so that children can grow up well
- Education opportunities

- good education

### **A place with beautiful natural resources and environment**

- Likes here because very beautiful.
- Wanted to find out about community before coming – what is the true west Vancouver. Participate in the place. Even likes the rain. Yards are beautiful and clean.
- The sidewalks are rolled up at seven pm. West van is wonderful. Spent 3 years checking the maps for the best place to live. West van faces the sea.
- Hiking everyday
- Beautiful, peaceful and good education
- The sea and mountains are important but most important that people from all cultures get to know each other without the barriers of language
- Vancouver and Canada is the best country – medical and nationality
- Natural environment
- Close to downtown

### **A community with job opportunities for newcomers**

- Most important is finding jobs especially to find Canadian experience or Canadian certificate. There are good things at NSMS but sharing could be useful too.
- Want to find friend and improve English because then don't have chance for work. Want to have Canadian experience for future for CVs. Getting job is important to improve life. If have success and to pass onto daughter. Success is if happy in life and satisfied in life.
- Complains about working in 13 years in Iran and boss, now have to begin again because education in Iran not recognized. Have to begin from zero.
- As seniors difficult to find work; please facilitate, help seniors find jobs
- Struggles with not being able to find a job makes it hard here

### **A community with volunteer opportunities**

- Volunteering important.
- Volunteerism – soccer coaches, managers – impressive – allows people to get to know each other and contribute to society
- Opportunities to “be” a volunteer (seniors centre) – sewing, cutting (fashion show) – important to be able to teach someone something
- Volunteers

### **A place / ethnic centre for ethnic groups to do activities, ceremonies or special events, i.e. an independent Persian community centre**

- Large # Iranians in north Vancouver; so, they need centre for their ceremonies and meetings; need fixed place; not move between places; consistent meeting spot. Iranian Community Centre.
- Independent Persian community centre and all its advantages
- With a community centre, Persians can help Persians; centre allows Persians to take part in Canadian society better, e.g., elections, can learn English together, be entertained together
- Asking for current news classes; specific bus for Persian community to tour Vancouver;
- “Fixed” place to conduct celebrations.
- Please help us Persians by ensuring free space for us to conduct classes, yoga, etc.
- Noruz, other Persian celebrations; need a centre to conduct these celebrations.

### **A younger community**

- Younger community – more like a city, not like West Van

### **Affordable cost of living**

- Affordability of housing so we can stay in our own community as we age and change. Living in coop housing helps as well
- Community affordable at different stages of life

### **No racism**

- No judgement, no racism

### **Others**

- Don't want to make mistakes to continue one's life. For example in buying car don't have credit history. Car is important then can't come to English class and pick up daughter from school.
- Better to know other people's experiences so don't make mistakes. Because limits chances if make mistakes. If have more choice happier. Wants a career that is meaningful and enjoyable.
- Disparity of wealth – great diversity of wealth in Vancouver
- And of course to be successful
- Success – compared to one's own country doesn't feel success, but children satisfied. Passing time improved life, but compared to own country wished didn't come to Canada because life at back home better.
- Canada would provide a better life for their kids

## 2. Issues / Concerns

### Hard to connect with others especially Canadian born residents; hard to make friends

- Kids can find, but harder for adults to finding a place in Canada.
- Difficult to make friends with Canadians – culture is different – people will say hello but there are still barriers.
- After three years I tried to connect to other people, but it's so hard to get connected to others for working, communication, for enjoying time
- As an immigrant met a lot of immigrant people, but didn't get chance to be involved in Canadian community except young people. Doesn't think they accept her easily. Didn't find Canadian co-workers very friendly at her job.
- Volunteer at children's school – to make relations with Canadian. But Canadian people not interested in being friends. Her daughter said – she's friends with Chinese and Korean , Canadian people don't like to be friends with children. Has good friend through Mosaic connections – where they introduce with Canadians for friends. Most Canadians don't like friends with immigrant people.
- Another daughter experience – at school most around – when there were group things – she was mostly alone because classmates didn't want to connect with her. Now her English has improved so now comfortable with them and is better now.
- Maybe one or two other Canadian friends – but mostly from own community
- Less welcoming because residents are caught up in their own lives
- Making new friends or acquaintances, even finding people to talk to, difficult
- Finding friends / people to be / talk with
- Can't find Canadian people to go hiking, - they don't like to speak to immigrants – immigrants should help each other (cross-culturally)
- Everyone wants to enjoy community. Same opinion as above. Came from Seoul Korea – crowded city. When came to NS first too was very bored. Didn't have anything to do after 5pm. Came with daughter alone and was very lonely.
- Stuffy
- For one year in Canada – for her age (making friends) was difficult. For children in 2-3 years they were Canadian.
- Depends on personality – some are talkative and get involved. Others are not and like to read/study and not share as much. Others like to make friends and talk and share different ideas.
- Age, personality are factors
- No organizations to meet people
- Many that have been here longer have developed friendships. People who have been here longer and they say you can do it. Young people find it easier to make friends. In china the woman talks together a lot – the men don't do this. They talk politics, economy etc. It is hard to create this.

- People here care more and the caring is very, very important; need to find ways to put people together – through the HUB

### **Difficult to integrate into the community, especially at a deeper level - beyond basic respect and accommodation**

- See respect of other culture, but not all integrate and connected to each other deeply
- People friendly but they have a boundary. People smile but don't let you near. I would like to get closer to people than they would allow; not private information, but, I would like more details. I need to know people better because I live here. I want a good relationship with my daughter who is absorbing the culture, so, I need to know more about the culture myself; difficult to get people to share their cultural experience.
- Yes people are friendly, but, they don't often initiate contact; people good when you approach them, but, don't often approach us
- No one will engage in conversations in the culture here
- Even when you have more language it is very hard to make friends with Canadians. There is not a lot of talk that happens in the community
- Canadian people are very friendly when involved in church activities but not so much outside of the church – though they are very kind doesn't feel linked to group.
- We are from a different culture. In Iran, friendly different from what friendly is here. In Iran, friendship is different, people conduct friendship differently; in Canada people don't get too close; willing only to share general things; not willing to go deep
- I myself I don't mean friendship, I'm just talking about casual relationships; not necessarily go outside and be friends; people at work talk about things they do with their families, but, these workmates not interested in relating these experiences; offered to join them, but, not talking to me
- In Australia, so many friends from other cultures – more deep connection, not superficial
- Neighbours will talk more in old country
- Not many people around to talk to – no one in gardens or in the street to talk to
- People here want more money and technology though there is more time for quiet
- If you have common experience or you can tell each – share stories to create experiences together.
- Neighbourhoods are not as bright as in Asia – safety and uncomfortable – especially when it rains

### **Language challenges hinder newcomers to connect and integrate into the community**

- NSMS events, classes – can talk English with more self-confidence, but when go to children's schools – the environment is very different and her son says don't talk because English is bad when she wants to talk. Here she thinks her children are her boss.
- Another mom said her children laugh at her accent
- Language – in public spaces doesn't feel can't speak because they look at unusual

- Feedback is very important – try to correct oneself – to improve.
- Language – making deeper connections – better understanding of language and culture
- She tries to go to adult education but not everything is close. Very limited choice on the North Shore for language – budget cuts.
- Feels lack of English is a barrier to communicate with those around her and has lost confidence.
- New immigrants have difficulty when they can't speak English – can't explain their problems eg. House problems can't communicate with City Hall – need people to help them – support – translation
- Worry about how to resolve problems when people can't explain themselves – even hospital
- Most new Canadians language problem, like me. Book learning OK but can't speak well; people don't consider me well educated because language not good, and don't have job; all of my time spent for studying, work at home; whereas in Canada only housewife; it's related to me, but, I think the government can make it easier for educated people to share their experience with the society, e.g., I worked as a gynaecologist for 10 years but in Canada I cannot do anything. Overqualified for everything in Canada; non one wants you because you're overqualified; Gov't must be able to make it easier for us to make use of our education
- Language barrier causes problems in job market and so forced to do unskilled labour; takes a long time to get career established; so many educated families that cannot get work in their own expert field forced to take menial labour; cannot use savings; MOST important issue is this PLUS not opportunities to mix and feel less isolated; Gov't not doing enough to help immigrants gain the education necessary to establish their qualifications; or have them recognized; vicious circle; don't have time to study government must reduce expectations re English
- I don't agree that language requirement should be reduced; I can see now that English ability is crucial to succeed in advanced education so these qualifications criteria are good
- I studied English translation in Iran, I taught English, but, when I arrived in Canada I realized I knew nothing, e.g., slang, grammar, e.g. Tenses; LANGUAGE help needed
- Different in work – with feedback with coworkers and noises from building and you need to ask and continue to ask to make changes with rental building maintenance. Communication was difficult and not forthcoming. She wanted an action plan. Not good communication was not the same way she expected. More back and forth through processes
- Language is the biggest issue to overcome – to understand
- Doesn't feel confident -- Will keep quiet if he doesn't understand – likes the help that he gets from the classes at the library.
- Language is a barrier
- Meetup.org – lots in Vancouver but no on North Shore

**Employment challenges: hard to find advanced / professional employment opportunities because of lack of language skills, foreign credential recognition or local experiences**

- Big issue is how we can get jobs to people

- When I applied for a job in Park Royal, they didn't call back. I'm willing to work here as a volunteer and you can hire me if you like me. I worked there for a week, and after that, ok we like you we can hire you now. The hiring manager was a Persian guy – I didn't want to hire you because there are already so many Persians working in this store. And I don't want the general manager thinking I'm only hiring Persian guys. So I wanted to see if anyone else wanted to apply for this job.
- I have skills but have no place to volunteer and use these skills to help young people; seniors could pass on skills and knowledge to younger people
- The need to get a criminal record check for volunteering is a barrier
- Most new Canadians language problem, like me. Book learning OK but can't speak well; people don't consider me well educated because language not good, and don't have job; all of my time spent for studying, work at home; whereas in Canada only housewife; it's related to me, but, I think the government can make it easier for educated people to share their experience with the society, e.g., I worked as a gynaecologist for 10 years but in Canada I cannot do anything. Overqualified for everything in Canada; non one wants you because you're overqualified; government must be able to make it easier for us to make use of our education
- language barrier causes problems in job market and so forced to do unskilled labour; takes a long time to get career established; so many educated families that cannot get work in their own expert field forced to take menial labour; cannot use savings; MOST important issue is this PLUS not opportunities to mix and feel less isolated; Gov't not doing enough to help immigrants gain the education necessary to establish their qualifications; or have them recognized; vicious circle; don't have time to study; government must reduce expectations re English
- job security; I don't like that I get advice to take menial jobs; I was told I could use my degree here; this is what professionals are told, we need your expertise, but when we arrive it's different; this is not OK to do survival jobs; people will do them in order to be involved in community and to gain Canadian experience, plus, necessary income
- They don't know about marketing the job atmosphere here – they have to be familiar with that issue
- To have qualifications accepted; and, also social not accepted;

**Lack of positive attitude and willingness of integration from both immigrant and Canadian born residents**

- But if people aren't willing to participate, it's not up to the organization
- How do we motivate the people to participate?
- If people come with a closed mind, then that's how it's going to be continued
- Lack of welcoming – people are so involved in their own lives
- Happy when they feel they have moved forward – school achievements etc.
- When they have improved they can relax and enjoy society

### 3. Consequence

#### Isolation

- If you disconnect yourself from the world, you get depressed
- Younger tried fashion, movies arts and didn't work for her, but found it worked with other immigrant friends. Found Asian people more friendly because when starts conversation with them they continue to have conversation. Canadian people try to stop conversation – maybe they don't like conversation.
- English barrier in every connection of friends. Had to improve English and delayed connection in community to only concentrate on improving English. Even after it got better still found difficult with connections. Accepted poor English and not postpone speaking and connecting and have more open-minded thinking.

#### Ethnic enclaves

- Different communities are very centralized – north shore is Iranian, Richmond is Chinese, the shops, the restaurants, Surrey is another people
- Somehow they are separated
- I go to school, there are so many students from the same country
- But on the other hand, you can't integrate
- It was nice for my son to find English speaking friends, but they were all Iranians,
- They have the same problems, they understand each other better
- Even now when I go shopping I speak Farsi, there's no need to understand the other culture, or speak English
- Why would I communicate to someone else who speaks English? In North Van it's all the same
- In my school, if there was a Chinese person sitting next to me, it would be easier for both of us to learn English
- Downtown is more multicultural – in Pacific Centre there are different cultures. Park Royal is mostly Persians and Chinese

#### Homeless youth and adults

- Kids living in the woods
- Homeless, e.g., young adults living in the woods

### 4. Challenges that keep the community from making the progress we want

### **Hard to access to services, i.e. language services and health care services: lack of information of the services; long waiting list of free English classes**

- Ok, I want to start, but where? Is there any place to guide me through this journey? This is missing
- Not many classes and difficult to get into classes
- ESL book club space is limited and it is the luck of the draw to get into – frustrating that there are not more spaces
- West van seniors community centre has let's talk but has a charge
- Hard to find places to study English
- Pharmacare and pharmacy plan; needs help with finding out about pharma care and way of getting medication as cheaply as possible
- Not everyone is very patient with newcomers and might be lower than 10 years ago.
- Finds multicultural friends – will speak in first language at home and we need more English classes to gather and speak English and learn the culture.
- ESL centre on the North Shore – needs support. Convenient and close – not having to go to downtown. Formal English classes and newcomer to come to make friends and learn local society. How to handle issues in the society. Something formalized to help learn cultural norms. Right now they feel it is on their own to learn. This class is good because you learn the class and culture.
- Communication – cultural expectations – how are services used and presented
- Emergency services for new immigrants – don't know where to turn – friend problem with locking herself out – couldn't get locksmith
- Support in own language – some is available but not always
- Emergency room waits are too long – don't use volunteers that they could – there are people from other countries who could alleviate this problem but they don't – friend who wanted to help but they didn't accept him even though he had a lot of education
- Systems are difficult to change (health care) – have to be within system to function which is why volunteers can't jump in – it's complicated
- Some things can't be changed but some can
- Different systems – in Korea all bills paid at the same time – I miss paying bills because bill paying cycle is different
- Finding credible sources very difficult i.e. who can you trust. Asked other friends and relatives to come to a decision – went to people one trust.
- 10 years ago felt there were more government newcomer groups

### **Lack of recreation activities and places, especially for youth and teens**

- Worry about teenager – says same thing – nothing after 9. No activities after school – nothing for hangout with friends in the street. For young people boring. But for parents and mom – happy for this so children stay at home.

- Overall: feeling bored, wanting friendship and participation.
- Other friends, let's go to hookah places, in North Vancouver.
- But doesn't like for her – not suitable. Everywhere in NS is not for young people and is boring. Doesn't know what more to see but doesn't feel NS is her place. More crowded. Because came from a crowded city, not like here. Sometimes boring and can't stand it here. Likes here, but problem is with people – thinks reason is (lives in west van more for old people doesn't see young people) . Tehran is a live city. Would like night life, things happening after 6pm and have more people her own age. More friendships.
- Young people are challenged due to the problems we made like the economy so now they have to clean up some mess
- Exercise at community centre - need more adult sports (ping pong /table tennis)
- Community should have character – opportunity to learn from others – can learn from people who come from different countries
- Lots of opportunities for women – not so many activities for men
- Why is recreation centre not free
- Have various classes on Saturdays, but, must pay for it. Hard to afford these classes, as seniors. Very popular event, these Saturday classes, but too expensive; also, not continuous – gets cancelled frequently
- All the shopping centres close at ten, but in my city it's different
- Vancouver almost every place closes at 9:00 – so we say let's go to cinema – the good one is downtown. Have to bus. To drive, we look for parking for an hour, and we can't have 5 passengers in one car because we're new drivers. So cinema is cancelled. So let's go somewhere else
- NIMBY issues e.g. Recovery centre
- Too many signs in community – should make less signs and use money to make recreation centres free
- Schools are not open for the public

### **Lack of volunteer opportunities**

- Volunteer very important; hard to find volunteer opportunities related to education; MOSAIC was doing this by having case manager; but, this program was not particularly effective, I had to find volunteer opportunities myself.
- Re volunteering, there are opportunities, but, hard to get volunteer opportunities in your expert field.
- Doesn't care about child's school but wants to improve overall. Working hard to move forward setting up work clubs at school
- Too many hurdles to volunteer (e.g. criminal record checks)

### **Lack of public awareness and education associated with immigrant integration**

- Limitation of residents' education as a result of political blindness
- Integration of new immigrants – simple banking – a lot of people they have a problem – these people they need to know these issue
- Classes offered to help immigrants merge into new community BUT nothing for native Canadians to expand their own sense of community, and, think more about immigrants experience; many immigrants feel isolated, not accepted by Canadians; people frustrated not

### **Ineffective community plan, policies and bylaw**

- Limitations of current Community Plan
- Noise restrictions can dampen people's ability to enjoy themselves
- Noise limits – would rather let people enjoy themselves  
Political reality / political system does not do the positive things that social planners have known about for years.
- Need permission to play on fields in North Vancouver

### **Poor condition of community facilities and infrastructures**

- Built seniors home on busy street across from village; community planning isn't well thought out
- Phibbs Exchange is dark and feels unsafe
- West Vancouver Taylor Way is dark. Don't feel safe as a pedestrian. Have asked for lights and none being installed.
- Strange that we don't spend money on lights when Canada is not a poor country - don't know who to report to

### **Education system in Canada is complicated compared to it in their home country**

- Nordic model – Finland changed high school system and educated better
- Political blindness keeps us from educating our people well
- Education system and sharing information – lots of problems with this here. Went to university and found out took many wrong courses and made so many mistakes and didn't know and felt like wasted time. In Iran education system is clearer because everyone has one way. In Canada there are many ways which is confusing. Had to make many mistakes before knowing what to do.

### **Not good enough transportation system**

- Phibbs Bus Exchange – dark and feels unsafe – long waits there; make the community alive there
- Transportation good, but, not good enough; bus service not adequate to get around in preferred way

- Pedestrians not always visible – people need to be cautious – pedestrians take responsibility
- When it snows – scary to drive - can't get son to school – clean snow on side streets

### **High living cost on the North Shore**

- Affordability of housing
- Housing – costs were doubled when I left Alberta and moved to Vancouver; lost discretionary income and it destroyed my life
- Everything is more expensive on the North Shore
- Capitalism has too much influence on community life and affairs
- Disparity of wealth in North Vancouver
- Housing costs eat up discretionary income
- General cost of living on the North Shore
- HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
- Capitalist society drives a lot of issues and community impacts
- Money/ cost
- Education cost is very high – Chinese students here it is still expensive but very good
- Maybe the financial crash has effected the economy so there are less services. The costs are stressed – older community needs health costs etc.
- Cost

### **Other**

- We're not a Nordic country (and I want to be one!)

## **5. Suggestions**

### **Newcomers need to take the initiative and proactively connect with others, including people from other cultural communities and Canadian born residents**

- They need to get out of the bubble, the comfort zone they've created
- The community needs to develop itself first – to get out of the comfort zone
- Personality is important – if newcomer wants to find a friend, have to try and be flexible. Courage and patience is important.
- To overcome problem, face it and keep trying.
- I realize this is part of the challenge, need to try harder; At the beginning you have to push harder at the beginning, and see if people are receptive; part of the challenge we all face as immigrants.
- We have to change ourselves and be flexible not try to shape Canada into our own home countries – if this becomes our home we need to adjust ourselves to the Canadian system

- As new immigrants, need time to mix; should not have to wait to be accepted to groups of native Canadians; I am the one who must initiate contact with groups and participate, talk, share conversation; mostly native Canadians not the ones who approach; I must approach them; e.g., member of community group attended 4 times/week; group had plays and games; sometimes group had dinners, lunches, I like to participate in these kinds of events which are informal (prefer dinner and lunches to games which can be more serious); e.g., sitting around table, I was the only Persian person; others were long time Canadians; two years a member of the group but not much shared with me; they already knew each other
- Enjoyed watching children make friends, play sports and the challenge has been for her. You always need to learn something new in life. You need to change your ideas and expectations. Just because it was like that at home it doesn't mean it will be like that here. You need to look forward to what the country has to offer.

**The receiving community needs to improve the “intercultural” understanding and encourage newcomers to get connected with local community**

- Everything in Canada is new and different – so that's scary and required courage for these new things and accept positively.
- Anything to make less scary to connect with people: one child teacher gave confidence for speaking while other child's teacher was not and felt English is bad. She thinks people are different. We should be patient and don't give up. Response of people affects how easy it is to talk and requires courage.
- Motivating people to get out and participate
- They have to get some motivation and get some feedback
- Teach and encourage young people to attend and come to places like libraries and interact with society.
- To motivate people to organize different things for other cultures to know – celebrations should be focused through media, through multicultural
- Why not have signs that say Any kids that want to play here come play here
- Teachers and profs can mix groups in classrooms
- West Van is very limited

**Create more space, i.e. community centres, for recreation activities, especially space after work: in the evenings, weekends, and holidays**

- Leisure place – the swimming pool, you participate in a sport, you find people from different communities. But if there's nothing after work, you go to your house, or your friends' place – and it's people from within your country.
- But the recreation centre is so crowded. Very limited. They should improve those sorts of things more.
- More community concerts, e.g., community concert in the Cove

- Love the Community Concerts in the Cove
- Put a Starbucks at Phibbs Exchange – put some 24 hour light and heart into it
- Communicate better – we don't know what's going on with new developments and community planning – more stories on the NS News cover
- We need a bigger government – to bring in all the facilities that needs be done
- Facilities for immigrants good, but, not enough; need more facilities immigrants

**Create more opportunities for newcomers to improve English: more English services (free or at low cost); conversation groups; opportunities to speak with native English speakers, i.e. seniors who have time to help newcomers; free advanced level English classes related to certification and licensure; English services in the neighbourhood**

- Improve English accent and English
- learn English from their children
- Maybe older people have more time and could listen and speak slowly and may be better to practice with newcomers but sometimes they use slang which is difficult to understand.
- Opportunity to speak with native English speakers, but they have limited time. They need to have enough time.
- Issue of time – people are too busy to have a conversation – depends on factors might have young kids or working , that's why thought elders would be great. Volunteering programs for older people could give good opportunity for conversation – 1 hr/day. Senior person is a like a tutor.
- More opportunities to practice\learn English for free/low cost
- Would be good for government to provide English classes to help with qualifications; e.g. in France, free academic courses related to qualifications
- English classes, at beginners levels; please include Farsi and English
- Course on neighbourliness
- More opportunities to learn English at no cost, or, very little cost
- Need a course on neighbourliness
- Getting people equipped with language

**Host more events and festival celebration for people to get connected; people are more willing to connect with others at events or festivals; people are more willing to accept others who share common hobbies or interests.**

- At Christmas, everyone is happy, everyone participates and show our happiness, even if not Music festivals from different cultures
- International music and dance festival at Lonsdale theatre – lots of different people attended
- During the summer in West Van there's more life – people from different cultures – they integrate with each other
- Christians

- Very important that we have big gatherings with people from different backgrounds; share ideas about culture, experiences of living in different countries/cultures; EG when I arrived in Canada, at home depressed; eventually got out and took classes. Husband pushed me out into community and this was so helpful; I speak with strangers about my own hobbies; e.g. husband's boss; starting to speak with people difficult because language problems, but, when start speaking with people, everything changes, people kind, not only related to government MAJORITY related to individuals behaviour and attitude to the world; at first people seem unfriendly, but, I realized it was because of my own negative emotion; I realized I had to force myself to behave in a friendly way and everything changed
- We can create the same celebration, it can be celebrated in small community like the school
- Parents could volunteer to bring food for celebration
- They could learn about each other
- At Christmas, even if they don't believe, they exchange gifts
- Gift giving day!
- Gift is an example
- My son says "who cares about that?" – Persian New Year is close – to get him to prepare for our new year
- More events in Parkgate Plaza
- Music programs can change lives
- Could do programming and hold more events in Parkgate plaza
- English corner has created the opportunity to make friends.
- Place where Canadians can teach and interact with newcomers to help learn
- Lots of things for children & seniors – nothing for adults
- In IRAN: government stages events to bring people from different cities together; gathering to bring different groups together; leads to sharing of experience, basic as well as intimate. In Canada, should be easy to bring different groups together
- Finding common subjects to make friends ie ladies talk about fashion.
- For kids – younger ages at earlier ages – no difference between immigrants and Canadians. For adults, most like to talk about parties and other things. Canadians mostly want to talk about hockey and there's no hockey in Iran. There has to be common topic to talk about. No one wants to talk about politics in Middle East. But talking about biking, hiking they will. Find out what are important topics in this community then invite others to talk. They find common subjects to talk about and share ideas.
- If there is somewhere we could make friends and talk about culture that is same as home. Making friends in building – they are welcoming. Has made friends over a common problem. When they find common ground they can make friends.

### **Offer more mentoring / buddy programs**

- Mentorship, also, SCHOOL COULD DO MORE for us. E.G., parents gathering to share experience about child-rearing issues.
- it's not only about sharing experience, it's about sharing emotion, love, heart, e.g., sharing intimate things like love of poetry; e.g. food, this kind of intimate sharing really brings people closer; not just experience; need opportunities to share more aspects of mind and heart than merely experiences. mentoring program we already have. NSMCS has mentor program which focuses on academic side of mentorship. IDEA: EMOTIONAL MENTORSHIP E.G. VOLUNTEER GRANDPARENTS FOR KIDS WITHOUT GPS. From Canadians.

### **Offer more volunteer opportunities**

- Volunteering – easier ways to find out about volunteering opportunities
- Volunteering – not clear how and where to find these opportunities
- More opportunities for kids of high school age to assist seniors
- Opportunities to help in the community – help with elections and government.
- Community centre could coordinate volunteers – training, interview – casual not formal – can choose from volunteer opportunities – for teenagers & seniors but not for all age groups and genders
- I think present initiatives good if they continue to happen, and, outcomes from it being seen; e.g., library champions; getting immigrants involved, and, back the community somehow.
- Please volunteering opportunities specifically for men

### **Provide more services / opportunities for seniors**

- Younger people get integrated more easily – older people have safe places
- Kids from high school could help seniors more
- Promote opportunities for older people to work with and help younger people
- Community & library organize activities – would like to talk to seniors' to learn about Canadian culture and language and they would not be lonely – in library or seniors centre – seniors speak slowly – sometimes happens on sea wall – coffee time
- Please weekly or monthly societies for seniors; please talk to people who manage public spaces to ensure free space, and, free classes  
Cheaper buses for seniors; or free buses even
- Possible for government to please help pay for seniors' travel, excursions. Any way gov't can help subsidize excursions

### **Provide more public education to increase awareness and understanding, to have better communication at various levels, and to have more information and related topics at public spaces and on media**

- North Shore News could write an article about Norouz, about Chinese people, about superstitions in different cultures
- Or in TV programs
- Signs encouraging activity, e.g., *“Any kids that want to play here come and play here”*
- Better communication at various levels so that community members have a better idea of what’s going on with respect to community development and community planning. E.G., more NSN front page stories about these issues
- We do that – we can improve it. It should be shared
- Would help to educate Canadians about immigration, phases people go through when immigrants to new country because then Canadians would be more compassionate about new immigrant experience
- Media involvement with these issues; better advertisement;
- At the moment, only Multi Cult society source of news/ want more current news than available here at Multicultural
- They can talk to each other and find friend, share ideas, problems, and so on
- More opportunities for conversations and discussions – “we’re starved for it!”
- An online forum about the Parkgate area
- Conversations/Discussions make a difference – we’re starved for it!
- Responsibility of media, to share information about other cultures – to make an awareness of people on the North Shore
- It’s always the same people attending the same programs – there should be different people – use other media to make awareness

#### **Provide more education associated with immigrant integration at workplace**

- Also in workplaces; how build relationships between old and new employees.

#### **Develop more multilingual materials**

- Please Persian brochures in addition to English brochures/info sources available
- ICBC so far Persian language is covered at places like banks, e.g., Persian employees. But, e.g. ICBC, no translation assistance; also other gov’t agencies.

#### **Improve infrastructure and public safety**

- Put some light and heart into Phibbs exchange: e.g., a Starbucks, more lighting
- Create more walkable villages
- More bike lanes
- Create more walkable villages e.g. Deep Cove & Lonsdale
- See more bike lanes

### **Engage ethnic communities, religious groups and their leaders**

- Members of Persian community being involved would help the situation; e.g., having conversations with gov't/community organizations
- Local government needs to pay more attention to Persian Community
- For reaching these goals, Persians feel they do not have direct connection with decision makers. **please more sessions like this** even better to include decision makers in these discussions
- Culture: how to share culture between Persian and non-Persian north shore community
- Problem with Persians being involved is not pushed to use English to extent they would feel competent to participate in community affairs outside the Persian community

### **More partnership between service providers and cultural groups**

- Multicultural society needs to work with Iranian and Chinese organizations

### **Others:**

- Persistence
- Need a public assisted living in East Seymour area; the village serves us well, and the new village at Maplewood and the one in the cove; these centres enhance feeling of community especially Parkgate with library and recreation centre

## **6. People / organizations that you trust to take action on the things suggested**

### **Service providers**

- MOSAIC Connections – where they find a volunteer – agreement between newcomers and volunteer to create friend. Canadian people who've lived 20 yrs plus – made really good friend this way. Buddy program. Maybe NSMS.
- MOSAIC Connection – gives a great opportunity to make friends with Canadians.
- It has to be lots of different organizations
- Multicultural society
- NSMC doing a great job
- ESL centers would make things better

### **Community agencies: Libraries, recreation centres and community centres**

- Libraries, rec centres,

- Talk to the Norwegians and Swedes
- Libraries
- Recreation centres
- Libraries
- Community Centres
- Libraries
- The library is a good place to learn. It is close and because of family and children may not be able to attend classes that are across the city or far away.
- Library board, committee might be able to make a change if they ask the community – on website or a drop box for suggestions
- Likes that library will extend loans – to help people learn
- Libraries are a kind of place to help newcomers, but most people don't know facilities in libraries. But she knows library champion volunteer. To be honest when got membership card and library borrowed books and returned. But when participated in champion program found a lot of programs and facilities in library and shared for use of other people such as English classes and even many Canadian people don't know about the program or facilities – they were surprised by the champion program. This program was very useful to her.

#### **Friends, coworkers, and people who have common interests,**

- Pen friend – to practice writing
- Small groups – when I went to apply for university. I got different opinions, and I could choose from them. If I just listened to my counsellor at school, I would be behind. Instead I'm just two months or one term behind.
- Organizations have bureaucracy – they'll just introduce me to some site – coworkers helps more than any organization
- The trust is with individuals rather than organizations
- Organizations give you a broad perspective. You need individual an individual for deeper understanding – for job search, etc.
- Simple job – even they need suggestion – they need friends of the same background
- Site - Meetup

#### **Volunteers and mentors**

- Anyone with relevant education and experience; if mentoring, then person running it should be qualified.
- Maybe Canadian volunteers can help with newcomers groups to make friends.

#### **Community leaders**

- Influential people

- Multicultural advisory committee

### **Schools**

- Schools
- Getting them out of their house and get them to the school

### **Government**

- Government agencies; I think they are on the right track now.
- City Hall
- Local government could make the change
- Government needs to look at the whole picture and decide budget

### **Some business places**

- Mt Seymour United Coffee House
- Mt Seymour United Coffee House (musicians can and should donate their time)

### **Others:**

- Trial and error. Give some suggestions.

## **7. Expected outcomes**

Some expectations specified are listed below:

### **Follow up meetings**

- Follow up meeting to find out what's happening with the new town centres and Phibbs Exchange and the timeframe for it; find out the results of community discussion on Parking in Deep Cove
- More conversations like this
- Get locals involved

### **Happier residents**

- We would be happier, less depressed,
- We would feel healthier and happier

- When happy don't need medicine
- If all the points listed above are addressed and solved, we would be in heaven
- Happy that her children are able to take advantage of Canadian services

### **Improved language skills**

- Speaking English is very important
- Communication – if they go through the right channels they get the information

### **Established connections and network between people from different cultures**

- Connection with other people – new immigrants takes more chance to have a voice in media like newspaper like TV. Express themselves. A short column in the newspaper and just freely express their experience and their problem and then have some statistical analysis for that and some priority. This is the first problem. This is the second problem. First identify – what's the real, real problem.
- Networking most important for job-hunting; only network is among Persians; how can I meet Canadians to network with; another view: Canadians and government have started to try to implement this but it takes time; networking important, another reason to have events where there is mixing to facilitate this

### **Improved employment of immigrants**

- First, to find a job related to your background. You maybe find something but far away from your city. And students should have internships.
- NSMS does stuff, but it's not enough. They had the job fair. But that happens maybe twice a year. We should see more of this. More power of employer to accept new immigrants. Mostly they don't hire new immigrants because they don't have Canadian job experience. Or low entry level jobs. Force them to open some jobs for new immigrants to start working as a volunteer so people can trust them. Ok – they are able to do the job as well as people who have been here for a long time. If they see this sort of activity for newcomers to get involved and make life easier for them somehow. Otherwise it's impossible to get a job. You have to start entry level then gradually to move up. Some people don't accept to do such jobs. They do things not in their own field. Their community is the loser because they're not using the skills and their knowledge because they don't have the chance to prove themselves.

### **More volunteer opportunities available for immigrants**

- More volunteer opportunity for people.
- When I got my first volunteering job, they said you are lucky.
- You can't get your volunteer opportunity because you are overqualified.
- They can't trust you.

- They said it's against the law to get you as a volunteer. Government say we cannot. Even as an observer.
- Trust is important.
- Government should put force on companies to have volunteer positions to get some Canadian experience
- The most important thing – say you have to choose volunteering job to improve English and language skills. But volunteering job doesn't needs specific skills. But if you want to get experience Canadian experience for educated people, there is no opportunity for that.

### **Recreation space and facilities**

- See places I can hang out in with my friends. A cinema in West Vancouver!
- More recreation centre where people from different cultures can get together.
- Much less signs on the road – put the money into free recreation centres
- Hear music out on the Parkgate Plaza
- The programs and events that have arisen will demonstrate this change. E.G., if I receive an email of a new program. Or I see a program at school
- Frustrations with health care system; understanding it
- Coffee shop and lighting at Phibbs Exchange

### **Others:**

- Reward or motivation

## **8. Now that we've talked about this issue a bit, what questions do you have about it?**

- Would like to talk more to other Canadians but stop talking and prefer to stop conversation.
- How can educated people do that?
- how will we implement solutions?
- What kind of follow-up would you like?
- What can we do to follow up?
- Most important thing is following up on community centre and whether changes requested above are being addressed.