



Mapping Our Voices for Equality (MOVE): Stories for Healthy Change

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Photos on this page from the International District on the MOVE event, October 2011. Courtesy of Julie Swanson.

Communities with poor health outcomes often find it difficult to influence the policies, systems, and environments that affect them. To change this, a project in Washington State is giving these communities effective ways to make their voices heard.

Mapping Our Voices for Equality (MOVE) received startup funding from Public Health – Seattle & King County’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) initiative in the summer of 2010. MOVE combines grassroots organizing with new media technology so that communities can produce digital stories and strategically use them for health.

MOVE began as a partnership of four community organizations. Two community health clinics—Sea Mar and International Community Health Services (ICHS)—joined with Entre Hermanos, a nonprofit serving the Latino LGBTQ community and Creative Narrations, a small multimedia training company. Since the project began, five additional partners have joined MOVE.*

MOVE partners follow four core strategies:

- Strategy one: facilitate the production of community-based digital stories.
- Strategy two: use these stories to create policy, systems, and environmental changes.
- Strategy three: share stories and access to storytellers.
- Strategy four: replicate the MOVE model.

Strategy One

At the heart of MOVE is the knowledge that stories can be tools for change. With this in mind, MOVE partners work with community members to produce digital stories that show the consequences of health inequities as well as the positive transformations that result from grassroots organizing. These stories are short, autobiographical narratives that are recorded in the storyteller’s voice and woven together with photographs, video clips, and music.

MOVE trains staff at partner organizations to work as trainers in digital story production. These trainers take a flexible approach to story production, providing workshops for groups or working one-on-one with storytellers. In all cases, storytellers have full editorial control. MOVE trainers have facilitated the production of over 100 digital stories in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.

Strategy Two

One of MOVE’s primary dissemination strategies has been to host community forums. These forums connect story producers with key audiences. To date, MOVE’s partner organizations have hosted four community forums.

ICHS, one of the original MOVE partners, jointly with the local community development authority, held the first MOVE forum in October 2011. Over 100 community members attended to express their concerns to Seattle City Council members and Seattle’s Department of Parks and Recreation about a proposed budget reduction for the International District/Chinatown Community Center. This proposed reduction would cut weekly access to the center from 45 hours to 25 hours. The Chinatown-International District has the lowest amount of greenspace per capita of any neighborhood in Seattle, so indoor opportunities to be physically active are critical.



*A current list of partners is available at <http://mappingvoices.org/note/51>.

Additional resources at www.nwpublichealth.org

