

Diaspora dialogues development

SFU launches two-year dialogue series on Vancouver's diaspora

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Simon Fraser University has launched a two-year public dialogue series focusing on Vancouver's diaspora communities — those that retain a sense of attachment to their places of origin around the world and have the potential to contribute to the development of those towns, villages and cities.

The aim is to bring the Canadian public and leaders of diaspora communities together to tap into this potential for change.

"These are innovative leaders who've done everything from building schools in Pakistan and funding education in Namibia and Southern Sudan, to organizing Haitian relief and supporting peace in Darfur," says Joanna Ashworth, co-director of the project. "These dialogues will explore current initiatives, critically examining their impact, and the vast potential of diasporic-driven development."

Kenyan-born Shaheen Nanji, co-director of the SFU project, adds that the dialogues "recognize the potential of the diaspora with their local knowledge of the community, to contribute to social, economic and ecological development. This phenomenon is gaining attention internationally, but there is much yet to be explored."

The public dialogues and leadership workshops begin in January 2011. Diaspora leaders are invited to send their stories to diasporas-info@sfu.ca. Or learn more at www.sfu.ca/diasporas.