

# Race



## Table of Contents

### Stories:

- [Building Pride, Building Resilience](#) pages 2-4
- [The Skin I'm In](#) pages 5-7
- [Legislative Racial Report Card](#) pages 8-11
- [“Telling our Stories”](#) pages 12-14
- [“The Browning of Minnesota”](#) pages 14-19

The episodes in this section are the stories of Minnesotans who experience racial disparity. The introduction highlights the Itasca Project and the Brookings Institution’s *Mind the Gap* report. The Itasca Project is a group of business leaders and policy-makers who are concerned about the future business vitality and competitiveness of the region. According to the report, race is one of the three major types of disparities in the Twin Cities, the other two being class and place.

The Twin Cities are often presented as a national success story on a number of indicators, but a glance at racial disparities in the region paints a different picture. Disparities start early in life. Twin Cities minority residents tend to have lower levels of educational attainment, which puts them at a disadvantage in today’s changing economy. Lack of education often leads people of color to being locked in a cycle of lower-skill and lower-wage jobs without a possibility of improving their situations. Not surprisingly, minorities are less likely to be insured or have adequate health care. As the population of minority residents grows, these disparities are bound to have a larger impact on the entire region. Addressing these disparities will require joint efforts on the part of the government, civic organizations, businesses, and community leaders. The Itasca Project hopes to engage communities around the region in understanding and eliminating these disparities.

Race, racial identity, and inequity are inextricably linked with America’s past and future. In this section, profiles of people of color facing challenges bring to life startling data on racial disparities in the Twin Cities. Stories found in organizations like the Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center, Emerge, and the Organizing Apprenticeship Project will provide engaging and thoughtful insights on the issues.

# STORY: Building Pride, Building Resilience

This story centers on the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (MIWRC) and Karen, one of the many women who has benefited from its activities. For Native Americans, inequities are multi-generational, and must be looked at within the historic context of loss of land, culture, and religion. The Twin Cities have the nation's largest urban population of Native Americans, most of whom live in one of the poorest communities in the region, the Phillips neighborhood. The MIWRC provides family stabilization services and harm reduction programs to help chronic alcoholics regain and rebuild their lives. The MIWRC also has a Cherish the Children Center that allows young Indians to learn the Ojibwe language and culture and build pride and resilience. For Lisa, Karen's daughter, and many other children, this cultural piece is very important.

## Key Terms

Disparity  
Historical Context  
Impetus  
Indigenous People  
Ojibwe  
Prenatal Care  
Segregation Tax  
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

## Survey 1: Building Pride, Building Resilience

### True or False

- Whites are almost twice as likely to own a home as Native Americans.  
 True  
 False
- Whites are as likely to lack health insurance as blacks and Native Americans.  
 True  
 False
- Due to racial segregation of neighborhoods, the values of homes owned by minorities are often much lower than those of whites.  
 True  
 False
- Native Americans' median household income does not significantly differ from that of white households.  
 True  
 False
- White students are approximately twice as likely to graduate from high school within four years as Native American students.  
 True  
 False

## Answers:

1. Whites have a homeownership rate of 76%, while approximately 40% of Native Americans are homeowners.
2. While only 5% of whites are uninsured, 12% of blacks and 15% of Native Americans lack health insurance.
3. David Rusk, an urban consultant, refers to this gap in home values as “segregation tax”. Racial minorities do not have as strong a wealth-building tool as whites do, because their home values are usually much lower than white home values.
4. The median household income for white households is \$56,642. Native Americans have median household income of at least \$20,000 less than white households.
5. While 87% of white students graduate from high school within four years, only 41% of Native American students do.

This survey is based on the following documents:

Sohmer, Rebecca. 2005. Mind the Gap: Disparities and Competitiveness in the Twin Cities. Brookings Institution. Available at [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer.aspx)

Rusk, David. The "Segregation Tax": The Cost of Racial Segregation to Black Homeowners. Brookings Institution. Available at: [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2001/10metropolitanpolicy\\_rusk.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2001/10metropolitanpolicy_rusk.aspx)

## Before Viewing

What do you already know about Native Americans in the Twin Cities? What are the names of local nations, tribes, or bands? What issues do these communities and the women who belong to these communities face?

## After Viewing

1. How does the loss of land, culture, and religion affect the Native American population today?
2. Why do we need to look at these inequities through an historical perspective? What does race have to do with it?
3. The Department of Corrections estimates the number of prison beds based on 3rd grade reading scores. Thus, if a child does not make adequate progress, he or she becomes a potential prison bed. What are your reactions to this statement? What would help to save money in the long run? What would be a better investment?
4. Why is it important to connect Native American children to their language and culture?
5. How does the well-being of Native Americans affect the future of the Twin Cities in the years to come?
6. What can you do to help eliminate racial disparities in the Twin Cities?

## Suggested Activities and Resources:

### 1. UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Introduce and discuss the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, G.A. Res. 61/295, U.N. Doc. A/RES/47/1 (2007).

[www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/declaration.html](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/declaration.html)

After 20 years of negotiations, the Declaration was adopted in September 2007 with an overwhelming majority of 143 votes. Four countries (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and U.S) voted against adopting the Declaration.

The Declaration recognizes a wide range of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, including the right to unrestricted self-determination, the inalienable collective right to the ownership, the right to use and control of lands, territories and other natural resources, the right in terms of maintaining and developing their own political, religious, cultural and educational institutions, along with the right to the protection of their cultural and intellectual property

Divide the group into small groups of 5-7 and have them read and discuss the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Separate sections/articles may be assigned instead of the full text of the declaration. Have each group discuss:

- What is the significance of the Declaration? Why is it important to have a separate Declaration for Indigenous People?
- Why do you think Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. voted against adopting the Declaration? What do you think about this decision?
- Give examples of real life situations pertaining to Native Americans in the U.S. that Declaration articles seek to address.

Have a plenary group debriefing. Collect responses from each group and record them on a flip chart. As a follow-up, the students can be assigned a project or a research paper based on specific articles of the Declaration.

## 2. Resources

Participants can also review *Indians in Minnesota* by Kathy Davis Graves and Elizabeth Ebbott, a report that offers statistics and insight into Minnesota's Native American population to promote a better understanding of challenges and realities facing Indian communities.

Other useful sites:

Twin Cities Compass [www.tccompass.org](http://www.tccompass.org)

*Mind the Gap* Report

[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer/20051027\\_mindthegap.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf)

# STORY: The Skin I'm In

Robin Hickman is working to promote positive self-esteem among young people of color. In addition to her work as a film producer, Robin Hickman is passionate about her multicultural doll collection that she uses to promote the values of cultural diversity. Robin was approached by Sharon Flake, the author of *The Skin I'm In*, to become a part of the team to create a film adaptation of the book. She works with youth who have read the book and are contributing their personal reflections of what it means to love the skin they are in. Robin is inspired by the educational component of her work and the importance of educating youth about positive self-image, and addressing stereotypes and beauty standards imposed by music videos. To support the "Lovin' the Skin I'm In" movement in Minnesota, Robin brought to the Twin Cities Kiri Davis, the young filmmaker who directed and produced "A Girl Like Me" based on the classic Kenneth Clark Doll Test.

## Key Terms

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Affirmative Action                    | Apartheid  |
| Beauty Standards                      | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) |
| Identity                              | Kenneth Clark's Doll test  |
| Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) | Prejudice  |
| Race                                  | Racial Discrimination  |
| Racism                                | Self-Image   |
| Shadow Reports                        | State Party  |
| Stereotype                            | Treaty-body  |

## Survey 2: The Skin I'm In

### Agree or Disagree

Use the following survey to assess your participants' knowledge, experiences, and views about racism, and to determine the most common examples of discrimination and racism in your school or community.

1. Race is a relatively new social construction, not a biological factor.
2. It is OK to have stereotypes because they help us to quickly classify people based on certain factors.
3. As long as stereotypes are not acted upon, they make interpersonal interactions easier.
4. We must understand and acknowledge stereotypes that we hold of others in order to prevent these stereotypes from resulting in prejudice, racism, and discrimination.
5. Racism and prejudice are issues that affect me in my community.
6. Racism is broader than individual feelings or perspectives; it is a system we are born into.
7. My friends and family members have experienced racism.
8. I have treated people differently based on their skin color, country of origin, or language.
9. I have heard jokes about African Americans, Asians, Latinos, Jews, Native Americans, and others in my community.
10. I tell jokes about African Americans, Jews, and Native Americans and I think it is okay because jokes do not harm people.
11. I do not tolerate racism and am ready to stand up against it.
12. I believe that we should all speak out against racial slurs and other offensive actions and remarks, because silence means agreeing with the perpetrator.
13. I do not interfere when another person is being put down because of his or her race, culture, or

language because I do not want to confront the bully.

14. My community is a safe place where everyone can develop to their full potential.

### Before Viewing

What is race? Where did the idea of race come from historically? Are there races that experience more privilege than others? Why? Do you know about *Kenneth Clark's Doll Test*? What is the significance of *Brown v. Board of Education*?

### After Viewing

1. What did Robin have to say about services and opportunities for young people today? Why do you think that is the case?
2. How does the mass media influence young African American women's self-esteem?
3. What does Robin describe as "the heart of the matter" when working with young women?
4. Based on what you saw in the video, what is Sharon Flake's book *The Skin I'm In*, about?
5. What did Kiri Davis discover when she redid Kenneth Clark's doll test?
6. How does lack of racial justice impact all Minnesotans?
7. What is the "Lovin' the Skin I'm In" movement? What are its goals?
8. How can you help the movement to promote racial justice?

### Suggested Activities and Resources:

#### 1. **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.**

Introduce the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination at [www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/d1cerd.htm](http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/d1cerd.htm)

*Explain:* CERD is an international, legally-binding treaty aimed at eliminating all forms of racial discrimination. CERD was ratified by the United States in 1994. The Convention defines racial discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life." CERD was ratified by the United States in 1994.

*Discuss:*

Based on the definition above, what examples of racial discrimination can you give? Have you, your family, or friends experienced racial discrimination?

Pass around Part I (Articles 1-7) of the Convention, and divide students into groups of 3-5. Have the students read and discuss the articles in small groups. Depending on the time availability provide groups with some or all of the group discussion questions below. Allow plenty of time for group discussion.

#### **Group Discussion Questions:**

- o What does the phrase "equal footing" in article 1 refer to? How can racial discrimination prevent people from enjoying or exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and other fields of public life? Discuss examples.

- Why do you think the Convention does not apply to "distinctions, exclusions, restrictions or preferences made by a State Party to this Convention between citizens and non-citizens"? (See Article 1.2) Do you agree or disagree with this limitation? What is the name for "special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups"? What article of the Convention refers to "affirmative action"? How do affirmative action measures help to advance people of color? Is it fair?
- What can the government do to condemn racial discrimination? What does the Convention say about government's responsibility in relation to racial discrimination committed by persons, groups, or organizations?
- What is "apartheid"? Which article refers to it? What apartheid practices can you think of?
- Why is it important that the state condemns all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one color or ethnic origin? Can you think of historic examples of propaganda of racial hatred?
- Do you think the U.S. is fulfilling its obligations under the Convention in prohibiting public authorities or public institutions from promoting or inciting racial discrimination? Why do you think that is? What does free speech have to do with it?
- What article talks about "equality before the law"? Which rights does the article protect specifically?
- Which article provides for effective protection and remedies against acts of racial discrimination? Which national tribunals and other government institutions do you know that provide such protection?
- What do governments do to educate the public with a view of combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination? Which article makes such education a requirement?

Invite groups back into the plenary. Ask each group to briefly share: 1) up to three new things they have learned; 2) up to three things they are surprised about; 3) up to three questions they still have; and 4) one thing they are inspired to do as a result. Record findings on a flipchart.

## 2. Resources

Participants can also review the Periodic Report of the U.S. to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination at [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/cerd\\_report/83404.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/cerd_report/83404.htm)

Discuss the reporting process under CERD, and "shadow reports" submitted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or non-profit organizations. Shadow Reports supplement, or "shadow," governments' reports on human rights issues by focusing on issues the government did not address or did not sufficiently address. For review and comparison, students can also review a coordinated U.S. NGO response to the U.S. 2007 Combined Periodic Reports to the International Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination at [www.ushrnetwork.org/files/ushrn/images/2008\\_shadow\\_report/Shadow\\_Report\\_2008\\_web.pdf](http://www.ushrnetwork.org/files/ushrn/images/2008_shadow_report/Shadow_Report_2008_web.pdf)

Other useful sites:

Twin Cities Compass [www.tccompass.org](http://www.tccompass.org)

*Mind the Gap* Report

[www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer/20051027\\_mindthegap.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf)

# STORY: Legislative Racial Report Card

The Organizing Apprenticeship Project (OAP) at [www.oaproject.org](http://www.oaproject.org) takes an innovative approach to bridging the racial divide in Minnesota through organizer training and leadership efforts. The project aims at influencing lawmakers through fact-based research. In 2006, the OAP came up with the idea of the Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity. Just like students, legislators received grades and points for their efforts or lack of efforts to ensure racial justice. The report card proved to be a great way to establish connections with legislators and encourage them to promote justice and equality. It also highlighted a number of missed opportunities that need to be addressed.

## Key Terms

Legislative Report Card on Racial Equity

Racial Justice

## Survey 3: Legislative Racial Report Card

### True or False

1. People of color are stopped and searched by police more often than white people.

True

False

2. White students are approximately twice as likely to graduate from high school within four years as black students.

True

False

3. People of color are disproportionately represented in Minnesota prisons.

True

False

4. The Minnesota population of people of color did not change much since 2000 and that population will continue to reside mainly in urban areas.

True

False

5. White students in the Twin Cities are more than twice as likely as students of color to meet state standards for eleventh grade math scores.

True

False

6. Blacks have an unemployment rate three times higher than whites.

True

False

## Answers:

1. People of color are stopped and searched by police with greater frequency, despite data which shows that people of color are less likely than white drivers to be found with contraband when searched.
2. Only 43% of black students graduate from high school within four years, a rate less than a half of white students' 87% rate.
3. People of color comprise 14% of the general population yet over 35% of the adult male prison population in Minnesota.
4. Minnesota is changing. By 2030, at least 16% of Minnesota's population will be people of color, up from 9% in 2000, and that population growth will not center in the urban areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul but in suburban and Greater Minnesota's communities.
5. In 2007, 42% of white students met or exceeded the state standards (MCA-II test), while just 17% of students of color did.
6. The unemployment rate among whites is 4.3%. Blacks have an unemployment rate that is three times higher (12.9%) than whites, Latinos have an unemployment rate of 6.4%, and the rate among Asian-Pacific Islanders is 5%.

This survey is based on the following documents:

Minnesota Racial Equity Report Card O5/06: [http://www.oaproject.org/files/MN\\_Racial\\_Equity\\_Report\\_Card\\_05-06\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.oaproject.org/files/MN_Racial_Equity_Report_Card_05-06_Executive_Summary.pdf)  
Mind the Gap: Disparities and Competitiveness in the Twin Cities developed by the Brookings Institution. Full report is available at [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer.aspx)  
Twin Cities Compass <http://www.tccompass.org>

### Before Viewing

What do you know about the legislative process in Minnesota? How can a regular Minnesotan influence lawmakers?  
What are legislators already doing to help address these issues?

### After Viewing

1. What do you think the Organizing Apprenticeship Project is trying to achieve? How is its approach innovative?
2. Jermaine Toney says the legislators were moved and cried when they heard of the results of the report card and wanted to talk to the project staff. How do you explain their reaction?
3. One of the legislators who received a good grade on the report card did not have a lot of people of color in his district. Why do you think it was important for him to move these issues forward anyway?
4. When Jermaine says that "racial justice is part of our values," to what values do you think he is referring?
5. How does lack of racial justice impact all Minnesotans?

### Suggested Activities and Resources:

#### 1. Human Rights Squares

This activity [\[1\]](#) aims at revealing what participants already know about human rights and stimulating discussion about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and different categories of rights. It focuses on equality and racial justice as one of the fundamental human rights principles.

1. Introduce the activity and distribute the Human Rights Squares Handout. Explain that participants should go around the room and get an answer in each box from a different person. Whoever completes all squares

first should shout out "Bingo!" Everyone should then return to his or her seats for debriefing and discussion.

2. Debriefing and discussion: Before debriefing, a facilitator may want to review the following resources, and, if necessary make copies for the group:
  - a. What are Human Rights? (From Human Rights Here and Now, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-1/whatare.htm>)
  - b. Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
Full text: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/b1udhr.htm> Poster: [http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/resources/UDHR\\_Poster.pdf](http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/resources/UDHR_Poster.pdf)
  - c. Human Rights Principles Poster:  
[http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/resources/HR%20principles%20RGB%0\(framework%20p1\).pdf](http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/resources/HR%20principles%20RGB%0(framework%20p1).pdf)
  - d. Evolution on Human Rights, including categories and generations:  
[http://www.eycb.coe.int/Compass/en/chapter\\_4/4\\_2.html](http://www.eycb.coe.int/Compass/en/chapter_4/4_2.html)
  - e. Human Rights at Your Fingertips:  
<http://www.un.org/rights/50/game.htm>

### Discussion Questions:

- Which questions were the hardest to answer? Why?
- What did you already know about human rights and what was new?
- How did you know about human rights violations? Discuss local examples of human rights violations and discrimination.
- What are the most important human rights principles?
- Why do we need racial justice and equality to promote human rights for all?

### 2. Resources

Participants can also review the Minnesota Legislative Report Card on Racial Equality that offers statistics and insight into legislative efforts pertaining to people of color in Minnesota.

[www.oaproject.org/files/MN\\_Racial\\_Equity\\_Report\\_Card\\_05-06.pdf](http://www.oaproject.org/files/MN_Racial_Equity_Report_Card_05-06.pdf)

Other useful sites:

Twin Cities Compass [www.tccompass.org](http://www.tccompass.org)

*Mind the Gap* Report

[www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer/20051027\\_mindthegap.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf)

---

[1] Originally adapted from David Shiman, *Teaching Human Rights*, (Denver: Center for Teaching International Relations Publication, University of Denver, 1993) 2-3

**Human Rights Squares Handout**

**Instructions:** Using members of the group as sources of information, get an answer for as many squares as you can and write it in the square. Each answer should come from a different person, who must initial that square for you. Stop when time is called.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>What are Human Rights?</b>                     | <b>What principles define human rights?</b>               | <b>Give an example of a human right</b>  |
| <b>Give an example of a human rights category</b> | <b>The name of a document that proclaims human rights</b> | <b>Give an example of discrimination</b> |

# STORY: "Telling our Stories"

Tou SaiKo Lee, a Hmong artist and activist, was born in a refugee camp in Thailand. Growing up, Tou faced bullying and discrimination because of who he was. Lack of self-worth later led him to gangs and then a juvenile institution. Poetry, spoken word, and hip-hop changed his life. He is now proud to be Hmong and is working at Center for Hmong Arts and Talent (CHAT) to promote creative expression among Hmong youth and raise awareness about Hmong history and genocide of Hmong people in Laos. Tou's story is an example of how creative expression can be a key to continuing education.

## Key Terms

|               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Courage       | Genocide                |
| Hmong         | Juvenile Institution    |
| Oppression    | Refugee                 |
| Refugee Camps | U.S. Secret War in Laos |

## Survey 4: "Telling our Stories"

### True or False

1. Hmong people came to America in pursuit of economic opportunities not available to them at home.

True

False

2. On average Hmong Americans are poorer than other Americans.

True

False

3. More Hmong Americans live in Minnesota than in any other state.

True

False

4. Many Hmong families frequently maintain their language.

True

False

5. There are only about 200,000 Hmong living in the U.S.

True

False

6. Most Hmong people living in the U.S. are young.

True

False

**Answers:**

1. Hmong people came to the U.S. fleeing persecution from the Vietnamese Communists for their involvement in the U.S. Secret War in Laos. Hmong soldiers put their lives at risk fighting for the United States and rescuing downed American pilots. Over 40,000 Hmong soldiers were killed, many were tortured and injured. Even today Hmong people face persecution and have to hide in the jungle of Laos without food and water.
2. The poverty rate among Hmong-American families is 26%, compared to the U.S. average of 9.8%.
3. California has more Hmong Americans than Minnesota does. The top 10 states for Hmong Americans according to the 2006 ACS were California (71,244), Minnesota (49,200), Wisconsin (38,949), Michigan (8,686), North Carolina (8,451), Colorado (3,875), Georgia (3,407), Washington (3,050), Oregon (2,729), and Florida (1,856).
4. More than 94% of Hmong Americans reported speaking a language other than English at home.
5. The total estimated Hmong population in the U.S. in 2006 was 209,866.
6. According to the 2006 ACS, the median age of Hmong Americans is slightly older than 19.

This survey is based on the following documents:

U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Population Profile in the United States, <http://www.hmongcenter.org>

Mind the Gap: Disparities and Competitiveness in the Twin Cities developed by the Brookings Institution. Full report is available at [http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer.aspx)

Hmong: An Endangered People, UCLA International Institute: <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=12590>

### Before Viewing

What do you already know about Hmong people and their history? Why did they come to the United States? What are the social and economic challenges they have to face in their new home?

### After Viewing

1. What challenges do the Hmong face in their new home?
2. What did Tou Lee have to deal with growing up as a Hmong American?
3. What does he mean when he says he didn't "have anything going for me in my life"?
4. What does he think was the reason for his involvement with gangs?
5. What helped Tou change his life? Why is it important to Hmong Americans to tell their stories?
6. What is CHAT's mission? What does Tou work to achieve through CHAT?
7. Why does Tou feel the need to work closely with artists from other ethnic and minority groups?
8. How can creative expression be a key to continuing education?
9. How does success or failure of one segment of the population (e.g., Hmong) affect all of us?

### Suggested Activities

#### 1. Hmong in Minnesota

Invite representatives from a Hmong community or a non-profit organization that works with

Hmong immigrants and refugees (e.g., Neighborhood House, [www.neighb.org](http://www.neighb.org)) to speak to your audience.

Provide brief background information on the history of the Hmong and the reasons they had to flee Vietnam and Laos. Emphasize the fact that the Hmong were fighting with the United States and often lost their lives to save American pilots. Provide information on the situation of the Hmong people now, both in the U.S. and in Laos and Thailand. Hmong who stayed in Laos have to hide in the jungles for the fear of persecution. Many have been killed or "disappeared" when they came out of the jungle. Many younger Hmong were born in refugee camps; some have been relocated to other countries, and many have been living in the camps uncertain of their futures.

Panel discussion will work best for this topic. Have each member of the panel speak for a few minutes about Hmong history, the way Hmong people live in the United States, and the challenges and successes they are experiencing in their new country. Then invite questions from the audience.

## 2. Resources

For general information about the Hmong:

Hmong 101 Presentation of the Hmong Cultural and Resource Center of Minnesota  
[www.learnabouthmong.org/presentation/hmong101\\_files/frame.htm](http://www.learnabouthmong.org/presentation/hmong101_files/frame.htm)

For personal accounts of Hmong refugees in Thailand go to:

[www.rebeccasommer.org/documentaries/Hmong/index.php](http://www.rebeccasommer.org/documentaries/Hmong/index.php)

All copyrights reserved by Rebecca Sommer (Adult supervision might be necessary due to graphic content).

For the history leading to Hmong relocation to the U.S.

"Why Are the Hmong in America?" Essay by [Jeff Lindsay](#), [Appleton](#), Wisconsin.  
(Published in [FutureHmong](#) Magazine, June 2002, pp. 14-15.) [www.jefflindsay.com/hmong.shtml](http://www.jefflindsay.com/hmong.shtml)

William Colby, the Hmong and the CIA By: Amoun VANG SAYAOVONG  
[www.hmongnet.org/hmong-au/hmongcia.htm](http://www.hmongnet.org/hmong-au/hmongcia.htm)

Participants can also review research data and publications of the Hmong Cultural Center at [www.hmongcenter.org](http://www.hmongcenter.org)

Other useful sites:

Twin Cities Compass [www.tccompass.org](http://www.tccompass.org)

*Mind the Gap* Report

[www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer/20051027\\_mindthegap.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf)

## STORY: “The Browning of Minnesota”

For more than 100 years, Neighborhood House has given people on St. Paul’s West side “that little boost” that people sometimes need. Gilbert de La’O, a Neighborhood House youth-turned-employee, tells his story of growing up in St. Paul in the generation that propelled the Chicano Power movement. Since its founding in 1906 by the Twin Cities’ Jewish community, the House has served vastly changing immigrant populations in Minnesota. Yet even now, Gilbert sees similarities between himself and the immigrant families now arriving from Southeast Asia and East Africa. Shared cultural values allow for empathy and understanding between people whose languages are different. Of particular interest to Gilbert is education. As he points out, “it behooves us to make sure everyone gets educated now to their fullest extent,” and reminds us that this will strengthen the whole of society in years to come.

### Key Terms

Browning of Minnesota

Community-building

Ellis Island

Harry Gaston

Immigration

## Survey 5: "The Browning of Minnesota"

### True or False

1. The largest wave of immigration to Minnesota is taking place now.

- True  
 False

2. More immigrants come to the U.S. legally than illegally.

- True  
 False

3. Approximately half of all Minnesota's immigrants are refugees.

- True  
 False

4. Only 50% of immigrants are able to support themselves or be supported by their families.

- True  
 False

5. 30% of the total U.S. population is undocumented immigrants.

- True  
 False

6. Immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits.

- True
- False

7. Immigrants currently constitute a bigger proportion of the total U.S. population than ever before in history.

- True
- False

8. The official election instructions are now available in 5 languages in addition to English. This is a new development for Minnesota as newer immigrant groups settle here.

- True
- False

9. Immigration to Minnesota has slowed in the last decade.

- True
- False

10. United States is a destination for over 50% of worldwide migrants annually.

- True
- False

**Answers:**

1. At the turn of the 20th century, Minnesota became a significant immigration state, peaking in 1900. At that time, 28.9% of Minnesota's population was foreign born compared to 15% nationwide. More than 60% of the immigrants came from Sweden, Norway, and Germany.

2. Each year, approximately 300,000 newcomers enter the U.S. illegally or overstay their visas. Total legal immigration to the U.S. in recent years has averaged about 900,000 per year. (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1993; Urban Institute, 1994).

3. In a given year, 25-50% of Minnesota's immigrants are refugees, while nationally 8% of all immigrants admitted legally are refugees.

4. More than 90% of immigrants (including refugees and elderly) support themselves or are supported by family members (American Immigration Lawyers Association, 1995; Urban Institute, 1994; Wall Street Journal, 1990).

5. According to the Bureau of Immigration and Citizenship Services, approximately 2% of the total U.S. population are undocumented immigrants. Total U.S. population is approximately 290 million.

6. Immigrants as a whole pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits. According to the Urban Institute's study, legal and illegal immigrants combined pay approximately \$70.3 billion per year in taxes and receive \$42.9 billion in services such as education and public assistance. Findings in a 1998 study by Cato Institute and the National Immigration Forum show that over time most immigrant families will pay \$80,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits. The Study also demonstrated that the average immigrant pays \$1800 more in taxes than s/he receives in benefits.

7. The percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign-born is approximately half of what it was throughout the peak immigration years of 1870-1920. (Census Bureau; Immigration and Naturalization Service, Urban Institute 1995).

8. In 1890 the official election instructions were issued in 9 languages: English, German, Norwegian,

Swedish, Finnish, French, Czech, Italian and Polish. Today they are available in only six languages: English, Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Russian, and Vietnamese.

9. Since 1990, more than 250,000 minority residents, many of them immigrants, have settled in Minnesota.

10. Only 1% of over 100 million migrants worldwide come to the U.S.

This survey is based on the Immigrant Quotient Test developed by Advocates for Human Rights, <http://www.energyofanation.org/8464ede4-cb05-48d2-a6c2-811c0a1e7987.html?NodeId=>

### Before Viewing

Have you ever heard of Neighborhood House? Where do many of Minnesota's immigrant communities come from? Is this different today from in the past?

### After Viewing

1. What is Neighborhood House?
2. How have its mission and activities changed over the years?
3. How have they remained constant in spite of serving immigrants from differing regions?
4. When did Mexican immigrants begin to come to MN?
5. What does Gilbert mean by "the Browning of Minnesota"?
6. When Gilbert says "this is a story that hasn't been told," what does he mean? To whose story is he referring? Only that of Chicanos or a broader story?

### Suggested Activities

#### 1. Articles and Stories on Immigration

Invite a representative from an immigrant or refugee community, or a non-profit organization that works with immigrants and refugees (e.g., Advocates for Human Rights, [www.advocates.org](http://www.advocates.org)) to speak to your audience about immigrants and the work their organizations is doing.

Collect newspaper or news magazine articles with a variety of view points concerning immigration. See Handout below . Have participants work in small groups and use one of the following human rights documents: 1) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 2) Convention on the Rights of the Child, 3) Minnesota Human Rights Act. The groups should decide if the articles contain any issues pertaining to human rights. Participants should identify and list human rights issues in the articles and share their findings with another group that is using a different document.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/b1udhr.htm>

Convention on the Rights of the Child

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/k2crc.htm>

Minnesota Human Rights Act

[http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us/employer\\_363\\_emp.html](http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us/employer_363_emp.html)

When the responses are ready, ask a few groups to read, briefly describe their article, and share their response. In the plenary discuss:

What issues in the articles are similar to those in your community? How are these issues dealt with? How are you or can you be involved?

## 2. **Resources**

Have the participants review the online brochure on immigration in Minnesota developed by the Minneapolis Foundation:

Immigration in Minnesota: Discovering Common Ground

[www.minneapolisfoundation.org/immigration/overview.htm](http://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/immigration/overview.htm)

Review definitions pertaining to immigration at

[www.minneapolisfoundation.org/immigration/overview.htm#definitions](http://www.minneapolisfoundation.org/immigration/overview.htm#definitions)

Develop a list of minority entrepreneurs in your community and invite your audience to support them. Invite minority entrepreneurs to your film screening event. Provide tabling space for displaying and selling goods, and invite minority entrepreneurs to talk about what they do.

For current trends and statistics, refer participants to:

Twin Cities Compass [www.tccompass.org](http://www.tccompass.org)

*Mind the Gap* Report

[www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities\\_sohmer/20051027\\_mindthegap.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf)

Star Tribune July 9, 2004

### **Do it on your own**

In the early 1920s, when my uncle came to America from another country, he did not speak English but was a very able-bodied person to work. He saved enough money to bring his four brothers to America with no government money involved. They learned to speak English, read and write, and all five went on to be successful businessmen.

If the Hmong or anybody else want to come to America, that's fine.

But they shouldn't do it at the expense of the Americans who have worked hard, pay high property, state and federal taxes, and tried to get ahead themselves.

*Karon Looft, Crystal.*

Star Tribune July 10, 2004

### **Making good on a promise**

A July 9 letter writer writes that Hmong should not come to America at the expense of the Americans who have "worked hard, paid high . . . taxes" and cites the example of her uncle and brothers. The only problem with her argument is that there are too many other factors involved.

The Hmong fought with the U.S. forces during the Vietnam War, specifically in Laos. They rescued downed pilots, led forces through jungles, guarded transportation routes and were subjected to daily attack with their villages and families.

When U.S. forces pulled out we left these "friends" behind and tried to forget about their service to "hard-working American taxpayers."

However, the Communist governments that took over did not forget how these people had aided the U.S. forces. Thousands of Hmong were killed, and most fled for their lives to Thailand. The Thai government did not force them back, but did force them to stay in deplorable camps.

Today we are only making good on a promise. They helped our soldiers in the past, and they help build our culture and economy today as Americans.

*Marque Jensen, Minneapolis.*