

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War,
Genocide and Other Human Rights Violations**

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**Histoires de vie des Montréalais déplacés par la
guerre, le génocide et autres violations aux droits de la
personne**

A research proposal submitted to the Community University Research Alliance (CURA) Program of the
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

February 2007

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Communauté Angkorienne du Canada (CAC).
Communauté sépharade unifiée du Québec
Concordia University
Creative Alternatives
Documentation Center of Cambodia
EQUITAS- International Centre for Human Rights Education
Isangano
Jewish Immigrant Aid Service
Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre
National Film Board
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SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RESEARCH:

In the context of recent tragic events in Rwanda and Darfur, it is arguable that few topics stake a more compelling claim on humanities and social science research than the history of genocide, war and other human rights violations. The unimaginable scope and devastating psychological horror of atrocity crime raise salient questions about the explanatory power, silences, and contested nature of social memory, truth, justice, and reconciliation. Oral history, we believe, has a pivotal role to play in educating ourselves and our communities about the social preconditions, experiences and long-term repercussions of crimes against humanity. Our proposed project, *Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide, and other Human Rights Violations/ Histoires de vie des Montréalais déplacés par la guerre, le génocide et autres violations aux droits de la personne*, will use the methodology of oral history to explore the experiences and social memories of Montreal residents displaced by mass violence, ranging from the Holocaust to war and atrocity crime in Rwanda, Cambodia, Latin America, Haiti, and South Asia.

The proposal has been developed by a team of 40 researchers in the Montreal-area, including 18 community partners representing the city's diverse immigrant communities as well as a range of heritage, human rights, arts, and education agencies. Through the evidence of individual witness and community testimony, we intend to address three sets of questions. First, how is large scale violence experienced and remembered by its victims and perpetrators. What does it mean to be a survivor of genocide? What impact does mass violence and displacement have on shaping migrants' social worlds in Montreal and altering the boundaries and meanings of fundamental concepts such as 'home' and 'community'? Second, how do displaced persons (re)compose and narrate their stories in Montreal, Québec, Canada. How do individuals and communities who have sought refuge in new lands construct and transmit their stories to their children and to people outside their social networks? How, when, where, and why are particular stories about mass violence told, and by whom? Third, how can narratives of violence and displacement most effectively be represented and communicated to wider publics in Montreal and elsewhere. How can these stories of trauma, survival and readjustment best be conveyed through photography installations, theatre performances, classroom teaching, on-line education, filmmaking and radio documentaries?

To begin to answer these questions, we will study the narrative structure of life stories, their oral form and the meaning of the words themselves. Putting horrific memories to words is no easy matter; words sometimes do not come easily. Only by deep listening to the provisional, partial and subjective nature of these "recountings" can we begin to understand the meaning and memory of war, genocide and atrocity crime. In listening intently to how refugees speak of their memories, we might better arrive at an understanding of what these experiences meant to them. It may, in fact, be the unfinished and contested nature of these stories that offer us the fullest access to the significance of mass violence.

We believe the core research strategy and methodology of the Life Stories project is ideally suited to the CURA mandate because the idea of "shared authority" is intrinsic to the collaborative work of oral history. The dialogic nature of the interview - researcher's questions and narrator's responses - produces a unique source, the authority of which is derived from the academic "training" and professional "distance" of the university researcher and from the life experience and storytelling of the community narrator. Sharing authority, however, is about much more than sharing training and knowledge; it requires the cultivation of trust, the development of collaborative relationships, and shared decision-making. It cannot be rushed. Communities are collaborators, and true partners in dialogue, as well as being subjects of the research. The project will devise strategies designed to share authority beyond the interview stage, enabling interviewees and community partners to help the project interpret interviews, and to participate in research production and in creative expression. The most significant outcome will be to transform the production of life stories into cultural and historical materials for Montreal's immigrant communities, to preserve within these groups aspects of their history.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION:**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

Like most urban centres in Canada, Montreal has a large, diverse immigrant population. In 2001, 25% of the city's residents were foreign-born. A distinguishing feature of Montreal is that a significant proportion of its immigrant population is composed of people displaced by mass violence, ranging from the Holocaust to war and atrocity crime in Rwanda, Cambodia, Latin America, Haiti, and South Asia. Our proposed CURA project, *Life Stories of Montrealers Displaced by War, Genocide, and other Human Rights Violations/ Histoires de vie des Montréalais déplacés par la guerre, le génocide et autres violations aux droits de la personne*, will use the methodology of oral history to explore survivors' experiences and social memories of trauma and displacement. By conducting life story interviews with 600 residents and by undertaking several collective storytelling initiatives, the project will examine how horrific events in other parts of the world have shaped the lives of individuals and refugee communities in Montreal. This project will make a significant, original contribution to the preservation of historical memory in Canada.

Through the evidence of individual witness and community testimony, we intend to address three sets of questions. First, how is large scale violence experienced and remembered by its victims and perpetrators. What does it mean to be a survivor of genocide? What impact does mass violence and displacement have on shaping migrants' social worlds in Montreal and altering the boundaries and meanings of fundamental concepts such as 'home' and 'community'? Second, how do displaced persons (re)compose and narrate their stories in Montreal, Québec, Canada. How do individuals and communities who have sought refuge in new lands construct and transmit their stories to their children and to people outside their social networks? How, when, where, and why are particular stories about mass violence told, and by whom? Third, how can narratives of violence and displacement most effectively be represented and communicated to wider publics in Montreal and elsewhere. How can these stories of trauma, survival and readjustment best be conveyed through photography installations, theatre performances, classroom teaching, on-line education, filmmaking and radio documentaries?

To begin to answer these questions, we will study the narrative structure of life stories, their oral form and the meaning of the words themselves. The telling of a story is a dialogical process that is charged, contingent, and reflexive (Pollock). Life story interviews are an especially rich source for understanding the multiple layers of significance and trauma in people's lives. They offer "a means of making sense and interpreting the experience of marginalized peoples and forgotten histories," as well as allowing room to explore the contradictions and relations "between individual memories and testimonies, and the wider public contexts, cultural practices, and forms of representation that shape the possibilities of their telling and their witnessing"(Rogers and Leydesdorff).

The "Life Stories" proposal has been developed by a team of 40 participants in the Montreal-area, including 18 community partners representing the city's diverse immigrant communities as well as a range of heritage, human rights, arts, and education agencies. While the researchers come from a variety of disciplines, the lead academic partner will be the Department of History at Concordia. Eight members of the department are actively involved in the project, including the applicant. The Department has an international reputation for the study of genocide and human rights and is emerging as a national leader in oral history and digital storytelling. Central to Concordia's position in the field is the *Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS)*. Co-founded in 1986 by Dr. Frank Chalk, *MIGS* has become an internationally recognized centre for research in the field. The Department has also nominated "Life Stories" team member, Erica Lehrer, as its choice for a tier II Canada Research Chair in Genocide Studies. The CURA will likewise benefit from the Department's research infrastructure. Dr. Steven High (CRC in Public History) co-founded the *Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling* in

2005 with Dr. Elena Razlogova after being awarded a \$344,000 grant from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. The Centre is equipped with 20 video-editing workstations, a video conference room, an interview studio, and a dedicated oral history training facility equipped with another 16 computers. All of these facilities will be at the disposal of CURA team members and partners.

RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE

In the context of recent tragic events in Rwanda and Darfur, few topics stake a more compelling claim on humanities and social science research than the history of genocide, war and other human rights violations (Chretien; Hatzfeld; Semujanga; Prunier). Perversely, revelations about the historic effects and patterns of major human rights abuses have become a ‘normal’ feature of contemporary society. This is reflected, for example, by the evidence emanating from Truth and Reconciliation Committees in countries such as South Africa (Boraine and Scheffer; Ross), Guatemala (Grandin; REHMI), Peru (Milton), and Cambodia (Chan; North; McClellan) as well as war crimes tribunals investigating ethnic cleansing in the Balkans (Hunt). The profoundly disturbing historical reality is that, throughout the 20th century, episodes of genocide and other crimes against humanity have wreaked havoc on peoples and cultures in virtually every region of the world (Chalk and Jonassohn; Phelps). Atrocity crimes – genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity - have inflicted a catastrophic social toll as measured by mass death, injury, material destruction, physical dislocation, and spiritual trauma. The unimaginable scope and devastating psychological horror of genocide, war and other human rights abuses raise salient questions about the explanatory power, silences, and contested nature of social memory, truth, justice, and reconciliation.

Oral history has a pivotal role to play in educating ourselves and our communities about the social preconditions, experience and long-term repercussions of crimes against humanity. By refracting the study of large scale violence and immigration through the prism of oral history, our project will be able to comparatively assess how mass crimes against humanity affect social development and public memory. Thus the “Life Stories” project will bring a critical research perspective to bear on some of the most troubling realities of the changing global environment.

Oral history projects must work on both factual and narrative planes, as well as on the past and on the present. Memory is “not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings” (Portelli, 1991). The Holocaust, for example, is both an historical event and one that is remembered and conflictually narrated (Portelli, 2003; Bialystok; Helmreich; Peterson). Life stories are therefore living things, always changing. Oral sources tell us “not just what people did, but what they intended to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did” (Portelli, 1991). Yet traumatic memories make the process of remembering and telling more difficult. Cathy Caruth has called trauma a “crisis of witness” (Caruth; see also: Bar-On; Dwork; Grouey; LaCapra; Stone; Boyarin). Audience is a key factor in how stories are told and received. Central American refugees in the Sanctuary Movement used their life stories to educate North Americans about the impact of U.S. foreign policy on their homelands in the 1980s. Refugees learned, through experience, to eliminate any overt political stance and to let their personal life histories speak for themselves (Westerman; see also Nolin).

The telling of a story is inherently performative; hence, oral history and performance enjoy a unique synergy (Frisch, 1990; Boal). While oral historians have spent a great deal of time thinking about how to interpret the spoken word, they have spent far less time thinking about how to read visual cues, gesture and other non-verbal communication; yet stories are told in and with both words and actions. Such an observation infers a need, as researcher Della Pollock points out, for further qualitative study in the area of oral history and performance than currently exists. At the same time, much new research and discussion in community-engaged theatre, communication, and film studies has begun to focus on three key areas: the performative aspects of documentary film; the audio-visual interview as a meeting place

between historical documentation, performance, and personal self-creation; and the research process that is inherent in theatrical performance (Linds; Malpede; Schinina; Segall). The convergence of these concerns will be another point of research and discovery for the project. The project draws inspiration from participatory action methodology (Thompson) to involve participants in “self-revelatory” (Emunah) and socially engaged performances by, for, and about their respective communities. Co-creative storytelling is the premise of the other collective initiatives that we are proposing as well.

Beyond the social and political importance of addressing realities of genocide and mass violence in the contemporary world, this project has particular relevance to the formation and expression of Canadian communities. Canada is home to hundreds of thousands of people who have sought refuge from large scale violence and has taken a leading policy role in this area internationally. The collaborative nature and inclusive orientation of this project has the potential to foster productive social and cultural contacts and alliances between diverse refugee communities with similar experiences. Equally important, the project will forge new linkages between displaced people and the larger host communities of Montreal, Quebec and Canada of which they are now part and the process of creating and developing working partnerships between the academy and community groups will bridge the gap that frequently exists between the two.

In addition to these tangible benefits, the project will contribute significantly to the development of knowledge in Canada by building new, interdisciplinary, university-community research capacities in the fields of oral history, performing arts, and curriculum development. The project will enable research team members to develop new methodological strategies and approaches to issues of displacement and community belonging. The attention devoted to dissemination strategies is focused around curriculum development including, for example, the effective use of new media in different pedagogical contexts.

RESEARCH STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES

A “good interview”, wrote psychologist Henry Greenspan, “is a process in which two people work hard to understand the views and experience of one person: the interviewee.” We believe the core research strategy and methodology of the Life Stories project is ideally suited to the CURA mandate because the idea of “shared authority” (Frisch) is intrinsic to the collaborative work of oral history. The dialogic nature of the interview - researcher’s questions and narrator’s responses - produces a unique source, the authority of which is derived from the academic “training” and professional “distance” of the university researcher and from the life experience and storytelling of the community narrator. The old distinction between researcher and subject is thus blurred (James; Kerr; Lanman and Wendling; Shopes).

Building on the shared authority of the oral history narratives, our goal is to extend this dialogue outward to include subsequent stages of the research process. Sharing authority is about much more than sharing training and knowledge; it requires the cultivation of trust, the development of collaborative relationships, and shared decision-making. It cannot be rushed. Communities are collaborators, and true partners in dialogue, as well as subjects of the research. The Life Stories CURA will devise strategies designed to share authority beyond the interview stage, enabling interviewees and community partners to help the project interpret interviews, and to participate in research production.

The proposed CURA project strikes a balance between the “breadth” of large-scale interviewing projects and the “depth” of small-scale ones. To that end, the project brought one of the world’s leading interviewers of Holocaust survivors to Montreal for our one day workshop held at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. Henry Greenspan encouraged us to go beyond a single interview in order to engage in “sustained conversations” with refugees living in Montreal. First interviews, he told us, “tend to evoke versions of experience that are ‘proven’ – ones we already know are tellable by us and hearable by our listeners” (Greenspan). Only by deep listening to the provisional, partial and subjective nature of these “recountings” can we begin to understand the meaning and memory of war, genocide and atrocity

crime. In listening intently to how refugees speak of their memories, we might better arrive at an understanding of what these experiences meant to them. Putting horrific memories to words is no easy matter; words sometimes do not come easily. It may, in fact, be the unfinished and contested nature of these stories that offer us the fullest access to the significance of mass violence.

Interviewees, both alone and in groups, will tell their life stories in interviews led by one or two trained team members. As far as possible, researchers will allow ample time for the interview process and multiple interviews will be conducted as a matter of course. Interviews will be recorded with digital video or audio, depending on the wishes of the interviewee. Participants will be encouraged to bring family photo albums and other items that may help them to remember or communicate their pasts. With their permission, images may be reproduced and archived with the interviews. Interviewers will ask open ended questions (drawn from the project's interview guide) that help guide participants' recollections. While researchers will try to attain comprehensive and relevant oral histories, they will do this with sensitivity to the wishes and needs of the participants. Where the interviewee requests anonymity, special steps will be taken to ensure that their identities are protected.

The experience of revisiting the painful experiences of genocide, war and displacement may prove deeply emotional and even psychologically traumatic for participants. Ethical considerations have therefore been of central concern to team members and partners. Our project's Ethics Committee has undertaken a comprehensive process leading to the submission of a lengthy ethics protocol (including sample consent forms and a life history interview guide) to Concordia University's human research ethics committee (December 2006). The project has benefited enormously from sustained reflection on ethics concerns. In terms of training and the mitigation of harm, we have agreed that all team members will participate in training workshops and seminars before interviewing begins. Interviewers will be taught how to conduct sensitive and constructive interviews that guide participants in the process of remembering. They will also be instructed in the principles and importance of participants' informed consent. In separate seminars co-organized by the working groups and the "community advisory councils" being formed in each immigrant community, researchers will be instructed in the historical and social contexts of participants' experiences in order to work as informed, knowledgeable, and empathetic listeners. Interviewers will also learn to be aware of the emotional and psychological needs of participants and to recognize instances of trauma which may require the services of a counselor. As a result, both participants and interviewers will have access to the culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate support of Concordia Counselling and Psychological Services as well as the assistance of those partners that have expertise in this area. The project will employ a psychologist or counselor on retainer. Additional training will accompany the collective storytelling initiatives being proposed.

One of the dangers of a large-scale project of this kind is that the bulk of the interviewing will be conducted by student research assistants and community members and not project co-applicants. Sometimes faculty members become removed from the research process. We have agreed therefore that every member of the project team (applicant, co-applicants, collaborators, project assistants, staff, students: everyone) will participate in the interviewing. Every team member will share this experience: hearing for themselves the life stories of refugees living in Montreal. We believe that this commitment will serve to further deepen the university-community alliance. In some cases, a university-based interviewer will be paired with a community-based one. In others, a member of one cultural group will be teamed with a member of another. At regular intervals, there will be recorded meetings of all the interviewers, project-wide, where we will discuss our experiences, share observations, compare notes on methodology, and provide peer support. From time to time, a psychologist will assist with this debriefing. These sessions will contribute to the project-wide commitment to drawing cross-cultural comparisons and provide yet another opportunity to learn from one another.

The project's five year research plan is as follows. In year one, "Developing Methodology, Engaging Partners", we will develop our research capacity (hiring staff, developing financial and data management protocols, setting up our project management software), develop our web site, and prepare life story training materials and workshop modules. These workshops, to be held late in the first year, will train the project team in interdisciplinary methodologies, ethics, digital technologies, and in the history and culture of the immigrant communities that we are working with. Our engagement with partners will include a series of community meetings and the formation of an "advisory council" of trusted people in each cultural community. Interview recruitment and interviewing will begin near the end of the year. In year two, "Recording Life Stories", the project team will immerse itself in life story interviewing as well as in the collective storytelling initiatives discussed below. As interviewing progresses, the building of the life stories database will begin. Interviews will be transcribed (with possible close captioning of the video). In year three, "Engaging with Diverse Audiences", life story interviewing will continue as will database construction. Regular training workshops will be held. Year four, "Strategizing for long-term impact", will see the completion of life story interviewing and the project database. At this point, researchers will be able to access all the interviews. Years four and five will see the formation of four "Community Documentation Centres" (CDCs) hosted by project partners. Each centre will be equipped with a computer workstation, a copy of the entire life stories database (except for anonymous interviews) and a copy of all project materials. The CDCs will become public venues where researchers and community members can watch and listen to the interviews. In so doing, they will help their communities recollect and collect some of these experiences in forms that would be useful educationally and collectively. In year five, "Dissemination," the project will focus on communicating the results to diverse audiences. Since collaboration works best when there is a clear purpose and a plan of action, team members have formed into five purpose-based working groups.

Table I: The Working Groups: Researchers and Community Partners

Comparative Perspectives on Montreal Survivors of Atrocity Crimes	1) <u>Holocaust</u> : Berger, Chalk, Cohen, Lehrer – History; Joseph – Religion; Rabkin <i>Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre</i> ; Ward – photographer; <i>Communauté séphar unifiée du Québec</i> ; <i>Jewish Immigrant Aid Service</i> . 2) <u>Great Lakes Region</u> : Gasengayire, Kabayiza - <i>Page-Rwanda</i> ; Ivaska – History; Leblanc – Anthropology; Ndejuru – <i>Isangano</i> ; Rosenoff – photographer; Schneider Political Science; Semujanga – <i>Études françaises</i> . 3) <u>Cambodia</u> : McKinlay - <i>Cambodian Genocide Group Reconciliation Project</i> ; <i>Communauté Angkorienne du Canada</i> ; <i>Documentation Center of Cambodia</i> ; Roth – Communications; Rousseau – Psychology ; <i>Temple Bouddhiste Khmère de Montréal</i>
Life Stories Of Haitian Refugees	Fick – History; Icart – Sociology, Jouthe - Political Science, Voltaire – <i>CIDIHCA (Centre International de Documentation et d'Information Haïtienne, Caraibéenne et Afro-Canadienne)</i> .
Stories in Education	High – History; Mukabalisa – Page Rwanda; Nazarri – <i>EQUITAS</i> ; Razlogova – History; Strobel – <i>Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance</i> ; <i>National Film Board</i> ; White - <i>RECIT/ LEARNING</i> .
Staging Human Rights/Rites	<i>Creative Alternatives</i> ; Guzder – Cross-cultural Psychiatry; High – History; Linds – Applied Human Sciences; Little, Stanley, Wong – Theatre; Schwab – Communications; Varma – <i>Teesri Duniya</i> .
Refugee Youth	<i>Dench - Canadian Council of Refugees</i> ; Jaffary, Milton – History; Miller-Communications; Luchs – Ministry of Education.

1. The “*Comparative Perspectives on Montreal Survivors of Atrocity Crimes Working Group*” will pay simultaneous attention to the unique character of each community case-study as well as the important points of comparison and contrast between them. The three research clusters in this Group will conduct multiple life course interviews with genocide survivors and their children for the oral history database and associated digital productions and analyze them, taking into account their communication (or not) of these stories across generations. The issue of inter-generational memory transmission is of special interest today to our partners in the Rwandan and Cambodian communities where anxiety over reproducing pain and suffering in the younger generation is manifest. Much may be learned of benefit to other partners from the best practices of Montreal’s Jewish day schools, the *Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre (MHMC)*, and other Jewish institutions in Montreal. The Holocaust Cluster will focus mainly on the life stories of Sephardic Jews who came to Montreal from Greece, Yugoslavia, North Africa, Iraq, Egypt and Lebanon. Holocaust researchers and their partners will record an estimated 150 life stories. The Great Lakes Cluster will record the life stories of 200 refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Researchers will explore the memory and meaning of displacement and violence on refugees from the region and examine the configuration of Rwandan immigrant networks in Montreal and the role the history of genocide plays in them. The Cambodian Research Cluster will examine the life stories from the survivors of the Cambodian genocide, now living in Montreal. An estimated 150 people will be interviewed. In year one, the team will digitize 500 existing interviews with Holocaust survivors held at the *MHMC*. It will also develop training materials. Interview kits will be tailored to each cultural community. Life history interviewing will occur in years one to four. The group intends to work with community participants in the development of radio programming, “life story photography” installations (that integrate image, voice and *Isangano*’s dance performance), and instructional guides to the teaching of mass suffering and migration without inflicting trauma on new generations. The community documentation centres will be hosted by *Page-Rwanda*, the *MHMC*, and the *Cambodian Genocide Group*.

2. The “*Life Stories of Haitian Refugees in Montreal Working Group*” will explore the role of violence in Haitian society and its impact upon the lives of Haitians who have fled their country during periods of crisis over the past five decades and how they have reconstructed their lives in Montreal. The city’s Haitian community presently comprises some 50,000 individuals. The group will undertake fifty in-depth interviews over multiple sessions aimed at situating the individual within his/her social, political, and cultural context, from childhood through adult life; discerning the immediate causes and context of their flight and exile from Haiti; understanding the circumstances and conditions of their arrival in Montreal; their subsequent life trajectory; and the consequences of their migration upon remaining family members in Haiti. *CIDIHCA*, the principal community partner, has well established expertise in conducting such interviews. In year one, the group will elaborate its methodology, develop culturally-specific interview kits, recruit interviewers and train them, and begin to recruit interviewees. Life story interviewing will occur in years two and three. These interviews will be audio recorded for the most part. In years four and five, the group intends to initiate a series of colloquia and public seminars as well as produce pedagogical materials and scholarly articles. A comprehensive analysis of the oral histories will be undertaken. However, the ultimate goal of the group is the transmission of historical memory to members of the Haitian community of Montreal and, in particular, to Canadian-born Haitian youth. Thus the most significant outcome of the project will be to transform the production of oral histories into cultural and historical material for the Haitian community, to transmit to Haitians aspects of their own history that otherwise would be lost, and to generate pedagogical materials.

3. The “*Life Stories in Education Working Group*” will design and develop pedagogical and instructional material/activities around recorded life stories, provide a “digital memory bank” by inviting

online submissions of refugee stories (for example, see the Hurricane Katrina Memory Bank at <http://hurricanearchive.org/>) and encourage story-tellers to share their stories within educational venues. In so doing, the group will explore ways to use stories in different instructional contexts and ensure that the stories will be “given back” to the communities and the greater public through means of digital media and online community space. How might students “work with stories”? How do community storytellers share communal stories within educational venues, formal and informal? In what ways might these life stories enrich the Quebec “culture and ethics” and “social studies” curricula by integrating these stories into teacher training and ongoing professional development? The group’s five year plan begins with the formation of a teacher focus group in year one, working closely with *RECIT/LEARNing*. Eight to ten teachers will meet 2-3 times each year during the life of the project to assess draft instructional material and curriculum development. Year one will also see the development of the “digital memory bank”. By year two, this social computing initiative will begin to gather stories, especially in relationship with *Page-Rwanda*. Development of instructional materials will follow in years three and four. Working in collaboration with the *National Film Board*, a bilingual on-line educational meta data system for teachers will be developed in year four. The project’s online database will be “tagged” to enable both French- and English-language teachers to match stories with the curriculum requirements of the province. Finally, the group will organize and host bilingual summer institutes on human rights education together with *EQUITAS* to involve students in collecting and using the stories and for the training of teachers in the use of instructional materials in years four and five.

4. The “*Staging Human Rights/Rites Group*” will design and implement a series of intercultural performance workshops involving researchers and community participants recruited from the life story interviewees and the South Asian, Palestinian, Lebanese, and other communities that are a constituent part of the work of *Teesri Duniya* and *Creative Alternatives*. The process will involve the collective telling and exploration of stories and themes within a safe and structured workshop setting under the guidance of trained facilitators supervised by project co-investigators. The workshops will employ various autobiographical, therapeutic, and self-revelatory performance modalities drawn from Story Circles, Forum Theatre, Image Theatre, mask work, Playback Theatre, and Shadow Puppets. Twelve workshops, organized in two-month intervals in years two and three, will build on one another to emphasize similarities and differences as well as the development of accessible and effective performance tools to enhance communication across cultural, social, and other differences. Each workshop will have a multimedia team providing on-site sound and lighting support as well as digital video and photographic workshop documentation. Trained and supervised by project co-investigators, the media team will both record the process and integrate media into the workshops. These audiovisual texts will become part of planning and running future workshops, as participants will be invited to view and comment on key moments and creative choices from previous ones.

The workshops will lead to both amateur and professional performances. In the first instance, workshop participants would work collectively to present their dramatized stories as a series of short plays or oral histories at community venues. These stories and plays would be interspersed with the recital of poems, songs and dances designed to involve additional community participants and to support and provide perspectives on the stories. For the professional productions, *Teesri Duniya* will work in consultation with workshop participants and their communities to script and produce a series of plays drawing on the research, stories, and overall experiences of the Oral History and Performance project. *Teesri Duniya's* unique approach to intercultural theatre for social change starts with community outreach and builds towards culturally sensitive dramaturgy - a method of co-creation that situates the emotional memories and lived experiences of cultural diversity (Salter). This work will further the development and recognition of the performing arts as an efficacious and viable means of exploring

urgent issues relating to the social and political effects of war, genocide, rape, displacement, and exile.

5. The “*Experiences of Refugee Youth in Montreal Group*” will facilitate the vital participation of youth refugees, by training youth participants in video and interview techniques as a tool for self-reflection and as a catalyst for dialogue. In the documentary film and internet portraits that will be produced with the participants, the group will address the neglected issue of refugee youth, with an emphasis on youth from Latin America (Chiswick; Driedger; Grouey; Hirschman; Wilkinson; Zuber). Group members will use a participatory action research methodology (Wells) to involve this population and to sensitize other Canadian youth to the realities of their peers (see Rousseau, multiple). Documenting youth experiences and making them accessible on the internet will strengthen initiatives like the *Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network* which connects youth refugees throughout Canada. Group members are engaging literature on both inter-generational and intra-generational memory, that is, how memories of a traumatic experience are passed on from one generation to the next as part of an effort to recreate an historical memory and how a group memory coalesces around certain historical junctures. In year one, the group will develop a methodology that engages young people and partners. Interview materials will be developed in time for two peer interview training sessions with an estimated ten young people. An initial five “pilot” interviews will be conducted. In year two, there will be a second round of peer interview training and another writing workshop. The first video-making workshop will also be held. An estimated ten interviews will be conducted by youth participants. In the meantime, research and pedagogical goals will be refined. In year three, video training will be completed. Sample video materials will be “broadcast” on-line to share and explore mechanisms for feedback. There will also be public screenings of the material to outside audiences. Ten more interviews will be conducted and a short (20 minute) documentary will be produced based on all the interviews conducted up to that time. Other activities in year three include strengthening the connections with schools and teachers. In year four, another 10 interviews (for a total of 35) will be undertaken. The group will work with teachers on the development of curriculum materials; the refugee youth working with the project will produce a second, longer, documentary video. Year five will see participating youth visit schools and screen their film(s) as well as distribute research and curriculum materials.

Taken together, the researchers and community partners assembled for this application have considerable expertise in the use of new media as tools of scholarly inquiry and dissemination. Because oral testimonies are critical to emerging scholarship in the field, it is possible to use these resources in numerous ways. For example, digital technologies can be used to open up new vistas for the scholarly and popular presentation of history in both real and virtual time, through web-based exhibits, radio or film documentaries, community theatre, and digital video databases. New digital tools offer direct access to the audio-visual content of oral sources. The life stories will be accessible in two digital environments, both utilizing a web-hosted database. First, researchers will be able to access the entire database of interviews (except anonymous interviews) using the “Zotero” desktop open-source software under development at George Mason University’s Center for History and New Media. Elena Razlogova, a co-applicant, is part of the software development team and would work with them in year one of the CURA to customize it for our needs. Zotero will help us collect, manage, and search the database. We are proposing a second, publicly-accessible web-based interface that would allow anyone on the internet to access the recorded interviews of participants who have agreed to have their story available online. The *National Film Board (NFB)*, which operates CITIZENShift - “an interactive platform where you can explore social issues through: film, photography, articles, blogs and podcasts” - has agreed to work with us in its development. This partnership has several advantages. It is an established project with stable funding over the long term and the software is open-sourced and has superior design qualities (<http://citizen.nfb.ca/onf/info>). This partnership will also provide public visibility.

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THE COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS:

The Life Stories project will generate scholarly books and journal articles, conference papers and special lectures. But its ambition goes well beyond these traditional ways of communicating academic research. Working with oral sources – the life story interviews of refugees living in Montreal – the project team will communicate their findings orally and visually as well as textually. We will produce documentary films, radio programming, community-engaged theatre, photography exhibits as well as digital storytelling initiatives such as the life stories “memory bank”. We will also integrate edited life course interview material into classrooms, especially in contexts that validate the family histories and identities of students coming from the communities in this partnership. Materials produced by the project will form the core of the proposed community documentation centres. Each centre, equipped with the life stories database and all CURA materials, will be a lasting legacy of the project. In effect, the most significant outcome will be to transform the production of life stories into cultural and historical materials for Montreal’s immigrant communities, to preserve within these groups aspects of their own history that otherwise might be lost. A communications committee will be formed to coordinate our efforts to reach diverse audiences. The outcomes can be grouped into four categories:

1. Knowledge Mobilization: the project team has identified a number of strategies to create a space of dialogue and exchange within the project and between the project and Montreal’s immigrant communities – a necessary first step. The project will organize regular community meetings and invite community members to participate in the project and to sit on the community advisory boards being set up. Central to the project’s efforts will be the web-based life stories database hosted by the NFB – a unique resource to researchers and community members alike. To mobilize knowledge within the project, we will build a web site in year one, produce regular newsletters and organize research seminars (8/year) and public lectures (4/year). A short bilingual abstract of all reports and publications will be posted on the web site and be made available at each one of our community documentation centres.

2. Pedagogical Outcomes: all five of the working-groups have made the production of instructional materials and classroom resources a research priority. The proposed focus group of Quebec teachers will therefore be integral to the research activity of the entire project. The Life Stories database will be tagged with regards to the Quebec curriculum and made available on-line to teachers. This pedagogical work will culminate in bilingual summer institutes on human rights education for teachers in years four and five. A variety of scholarly publications will also result.

3. Collective Storytelling: the project will undertake five initiatives – oral performance workshop participants will work collectively to present their dramatized stories as a series of short plays or oral histories at community venues; *Teesri Duniya* will work in consultation with workshop participants and their communities to script and produce a series of plays drawing on the research, stories, and overall experiences of the project; a series of documentary films and internet portraits will be co-produced with refugee and immigrant youth who will then visit schools and screen their films; a major “life stories photography” installation will be developed; and, community radio programming will be produced.

4. Scholarly Production: a wide variety of scholarly production is envisioned. The project will host two international conferences including one already planned in year one on “Sharing Authority” which will result in a special issue of the *Journal of Canadian Studies* (confirmed). In addition, the project team will produce at least one more special issue, an anthology, and two monographs. The first monograph, “Remembering War, Genocide and Atrocity Crime” will consist of carefully edited life stories organized thematically across cultures and include a CD-ROM or DVD. The second, “Life Stories – Sharing Authority”, will focus on the methodology of life story interviewing, community-engaged theatre, and sharing authority. An end-of-project conference will be held in Montreal aimed at communicating project research to policy-makers, teachers, community partners, and the public.

DESCRIPTION OF TEAM (*denotes group leader/coordinating committee member):

The following description of the team includes only the university co-applicants. **Berger** – is a medical historian who will research the place of health and wellness in the recorded life stories across cultural difference. **Chalk***– is a leading scholar in genocide studies who will be instrumental in drawing cross-cultural comparisons in the life story interviews and in researching how they can be incorporated into radio programming. **Cohen** – is a specialist in women’s history whose work with Moroccan Jews flows into the Holocaust cluster’s research on Montreal’s Sephardic community. **Fick***– will be instrumental in the overall effort to document the experience of the Haitian community. Her research focus will be on Haiti itself. **High***– is a specialist in oral history and displacement who will examine how refugees from a variety of cultural communities in Montreal recount their life stories. How do they put their stories into words? **Icart** - will research the history of different waves of Haitian immigration to Montreal in relation to the unfolding developments in Haiti itself. **Ivaska** – is a cultural historian of Africa who will examine the construction and selective deployment of narratives of violence and displacement in the context of immigrant life in Montreal. **Jaffary** – will produce a framework for understanding how young refugees from Latin America create communities for themselves. **Joseph** – will examine the life stories and memory of violent displacements related to the 1940s in the Montreal Sephardic community. **Jouthe** – is a political scientist who will work on the methodology of the Haitian group within the project and assess the group’s progress. **Leblanc** – will explore how the memory of the genocide and violence generally emerge in the youth culture of people from the Great Lakes who have migrated to Montreal, especially in terms of popular culture. **Lehrer** – will develop and curate inter-cultural exhibits based on material collected by the project. **Linds** – has expertise in anti-racism facilitation and multicultural education. He will investigate “theatre action research” as a method that can be used by theatre practitioners and community members. **Little***- is key to the project’s work in community-engaged theatre. He will develop new methodologies linking oral history and performance and compile a “tool kit” for community use. **Luchs***– is a researcher based in Quebec’s Ministry of Education who will produce a curriculum guide and disseminate research to teachers. **Miller***– is an award-winning film-maker who will document the artistic process and research the effectiveness of combining documentary techniques and new media technology to empower youth refugees through collaborative artistic expression. **Milton** – is a CRC nominee who specializes in the Truth Commissions of Latin America. She will look at the historical narratives of authoritarianism among refugee youth and discern how inter-generational memories play out. **Razlogova** - is a digital historian with expertise in human rights research. She will facilitate software development and undertake research on digital storytelling. **Roth** – specializes in race, multiculturalism and radio. She will assist our partners in the development of radio programming and will research the usefulness of radio in constructing inter-cultural bridges. **Rousseau** – is the leading specialist in mental health issues facing Montreal’s immigrant communities. She will examine the relationship between trauma and memory and advise the project team on psychological support matters. **Schneider** –will examine the configuration of Rwandan immigrant networks and the role the history of genocide plays in them (connections and cleavages). **Schwab** – is an award-winning film-maker who will recruit, train and supervise a media team that will document the performance workshops. These audiovisual texts will break new ground in developing methods for integrating media into various forms of self-revelatory performance. **Semujanga*** – is a leading authority on the Rwandan genocide who will be heading the project’s research on the life narratives of refugees from the Great Lakes region of Africa. **Stanley** – is a nationally respected and award-winning theatre creator. She will facilitate performance workshops and direct a series of professional plays for *Teesri Duniya*. **Strobel***– is an education technologist who is instrumental in heading the project’s efforts to develop pedagogical resources, particularly digital tools.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

A research alliance is of fundamental importance to the proposed project. Our project is an explicitly collaborative one, built on the framework of Michael Frisch's notion of "shared authority." The project team has agreed on a governance structure that maintains parity between university researchers and community representatives at key levels of decision-making. The final decision-making body will be the *project assembly* composed of all CURA co-applicants, collaborators and partners. It will meet twice a year and simultaneous translation will be provided. The day-to-day coordination of the project, however, will fall to the *coordinating committee* composed of six persons and the applicant. A coordinating committee was elected in September 2006. In addition to the applicant (High), it is composed of an equal number of community-based (Kabayiza, Nazarri, Luchs) and university-based (Strobel, Miller, Chalk) members. This body, meeting 9-10 times per year, is responsible for overall project coordination; internal and external communications; developing research protocols; identifying training needs; ensuring psychological support; providing financial oversight and employment supervision; creating benchmarks for internal assessment; and building the life stories database. A paid project administrator and a part-time technologist will assist in these endeavours. There is parity in community and university membership on all project-wide committees (eg. ethics; communications) and each working group has a co-leadership structure. Working groups will coordinate research activities and undertake community mobilization in their area. Sharing authority is therefore the project's "controlling idea", shaping everything and everyone.

The Life Stories CURA has developed eighteen (18) community partnerships, seventeen of which are with Montreal-based organizations. One of the distinguishing features of the proposed project is the large number of community co-applicants. Twelve of the 35 co-applicants are representatives of partner organizations and two others are documentary photographers based in the community. All of these co-applicants are making a personal commitment to be involved in project direction and management, interviewing, artistic expression and research. To signal our commitment to sharing authority, we decided early on to avoid making the common distinction between university-based "co-applicants" and community-based "collaborators." This decision reflects the high level of engagement of the community partners and their representatives at project meetings. Most of the community co-applicants have served on project-wide committees (including the coordinating committee) and/or have taken up leadership roles within their working group. They have fundamentally influenced the Life Stories CURA project's development. What follows is a summary of the roles and proposed contributions of each community partner organized by working group, but we will start with the host institution.

Concordia University is the host institution for the proposed Life Stories CURA. The administrative "home" of the project will be in the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, part of the university's Department of History. The applicant and seven co-applicants are from this one department. Two of the department's research strengths are comparative genocide studies and public/oral history – evidenced by the department's two Canada Research Chairs in these areas (one soon to be nominated). The Centre was co-founded in 2005 with a \$344,000 award for research infrastructure from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. Its aim is to transform Concordia into a national leader in digital applications to oral history. The Centre's recording equipment, computer workstations, interview studio as well as its video-conferencing room and dedicated training facilities will be made available to CURA team members and partners. The CURA staff members will have office space within the Centre. Concordia University has made a substantial financial commitment to the proposed project as well. All told, the university will contribute \$85,000 in cash, \$30,000 in RTS (5 releases in Arts and Science, 1 in Fine Arts), and \$70,000 in in-kind contributions for a total of \$185,000 over the five year life of the project. It should be noted that \$5,000 of this cash contribution will fund

our activities between the application deadline (February 2007) and the announcement (September 2007). The Centre's own in-kind contribution of \$35,000 is calculated on the basis of the extensive use of its equipment and facilities and the time spent on project work by the Centre's graduate interns.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES WORKING GROUP (9 partners)

Page-Rwanda (www.page-rwanda.ca) – is a community group formed by parents and friends of the victims of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. It provides psychological counseling and promotes awareness. *Page-Rwanda* joined the project early on and three community co-applicants come from its ranks. Callixte Kabayiza, its president, sits on the project's coordinating committee. Likewise, Monique Gasengayire and Monique Mukabalisa have sat on key project-wide committees. *Page-Rwanda's* objectives in participating are three-fold: (1) to educate Rwandan youth as well as other Canadians about the value of tolerance and non-violence, (2) to offer survivors still in pain psychological support that is culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate and (3) to research the consequences of genocide on the integration of survivors living in Montreal. *Page-Rwanda* will play an instrumental role in the "Great Lakes research cluster". Mukabalisa, a teacher, is a member of the "Life Stories in Education" group where she will assist in the production of pedagogical materials for Montreal's French-language school board. *Page-Rwanda*, which initiated the "Community Documentation Centre" idea, will host one. It is the partner's hope that the project will contribute to healing and reconciliation.

Isangano (www.isangano.ca) - is a cultural organization of young Rwandans that performs traditional dance and is at the forefront of the community's effort to create a cultural centre. Isangano means "un point de rencontre", or meeting place, in the Kinyarwanda language. Established in 1999, *Isangano* is represented in the CURA project by Lisa Ndejuru, a co-applicant. She was instrumental in convincing the project team of the need for "community advisory councils" to serve as an additional bridge between the project and cultural communities. *Isangano's* institutional role in the project will be to assist in the recruitment of interviewees, to participate in the interviewing process, to contribute to the "community advisory council" being formed, and to collaborate through dance performance.

The ***Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre*** (www.mhmc.ca) aims to educate people of all ages and backgrounds about the Holocaust. It has developed considerable expertise in Holocaust educational programming and the interviewing of survivors. The *MHMC* is very interested in working with other cultural communities in Holocaust education and research and will play an active role in the project. The CURA project therefore fits very well with its primary mission. It will help recruit and interview Holocaust survivors – most particularly those from Greece, the Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East. The Centre will assist in interviewer training, workshop animation, and the mounting of exhibitions based on CURA research. The *MHMC's* existing collection of 500 interviews will be digitized by the project and made available to researchers. Its director of communications and outreach, Miriam Rabkin, is a co-applicant and opened the one day project workshop held at the *MHMC*.

Communauté sépharade unifiée du Québec represents the 25,000 Sephardic Jews living in the Montreal area. It will assist the Holocaust research cluster of the CURA to recruit life story interviewees in the Sephardic community, contribute to the advisory council being established, and help team members communicate project findings within the community.

Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada (www.jias.org) is Canada's oldest chartered immigrant settlement organization. Founded in 1922, the JIAS has been building the Jewish community in Canada for over 80 years. It will assist the project in recruiting interviewees, in forming an advisory council of trusted persons, and in diffusing research results within Montreal's Jewish community.

Cambodian Genocide Group (<http://www.cambodiangenocide.org>) is an international student organization dedicated to the study of the Cambodian genocide. The Montreal area chapter, headed by

co-applicant Catrina McKinlay, includes members from a cross-section of the community. Its central goals are to foster discussion and awareness about the genocide and to pursue justice for Cambodian genocide survivors. For example, the *Group's* reconciliation project collects and documents statements from survivors. As a result, the *Cambodian Genocide Group's* involvement in the proposed CURA would further its existing goals to educate and document the Cambodian genocide. It will coordinate life story interviewing among Montreal's Cambodian community and contribute to research. As an individual co-applicant, McKinlay has been a key member of the research team – chairing the project's ethics committee and leading the Cambodian research cluster.

Communauté Angkorienne du Canada (www.cambodia.ca) is an independent non-partisan community organization founded in 2001. Its mission is to promote Khmer culture among young people, contribute to family well-being and to encourage socio-cultural exchange between Canadians of diverse origins. It organizes a variety of youth activities as well as the annual Festival Cambodian at Long Sault. CAC will assist in the recruitment of interviewees in Montreal's Cambodian community, contribute to outreach and assist in the formation of an advisory council. It hopes that the interviewing and research activities of the project will cause different communities living in Montreal to reflect on memory, contribute to the healing process and aid future generations to comprehend why this genocide occurred.

Temple Bouddhiste Khmer de Montréal is a religious organization created in 2000 with the objective of organizing and maintaining a pagoda for the religious services of its members. The temple in Anjou provides a communal space where the Khmer community can practice its religion and get news from its country of origin. The *Temple Bouddhiste* has agreed to actively participate in the project and assist in interviewing within Montreal's Khmer community. In doing so, it hopes that the project will contribute to a better understanding of why these criminal acts were allowed to occur.

Documentation Centre of Cambodia (www.dccam.org) was established by Yale University's Cambodia Genocide Program in 1995 and became an autonomous Cambodian research institute in 1997. The Centre is a non-profit, non-governmental organization with two objectives. The first is to record and preserve the history of the Khmer Rouge regime for future generations. The second is to assemble materials that serve as potential evidence in support of those who seek accountability for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge. DC-CAM's role within the Life Stories CURA is substantially different from the others as it is our only non-Montreal based partner. It will assist us in developing culturally sensitive interview kits and other training materials as well as internship possibilities for graduate students.

LIFE STORIES OF HAITIAN REFUGEES WORKING GROUP (1 partner)

Le Centre international de documentation et d'information haïtienne, caribéenne et afro canadienne (CIDIHCA) is a non-profit organization founded in Montreal in 1983. Its activities include information and documentation, cultural and scientific training, publishing, and audio-visual production. Co-applicant Franz Voltaire, CIDIHCA's director, has well established expertise in conducting interviews and has produced several documentary video films. As the core partner in this working group, CIDIHCA will be fundamentally involved in every stage of research and dissemination.

LIFE STORIES IN EDUCATION WORKING GROUP (4 partners)

Equitas – International Centre for Human Rights Education (www.equitas.org) has forty years of experience in the development and delivery of human rights education programming in Canada and around the world. Its participatory education and training programs help people become more effective human rights monitors, advocates, and educators. The content of its programmes centre on the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours required for individuals to understand, assert, and defend their human rights as well as to respect the rights of others. Its director of education, Vincenza Nazzari, a co-applicant, is a key member of the project team – serving on the coordinating committee

and as co-leader of this working group. EQUITAS will contribute in a variety of ways including the hosting of a summer institute in human rights education (for teachers) in years 4 and 5.

RECIT/LEARNing Communities (<http://www.learnquebec.ca>) is a leading educational resource network in Quebec. This non-profit educational foundation supports and promotes pedagogical collaboration and innovation through the use of information technology and modeling of best practice. The *LEARNing Communities*' mission is to support and promote pedagogical collaboration and innovation in the community of learners in the primary and secondary schools of Quebec. Its director, Bev White, is a co-applicant in the CURA application. Because this partner has direct ties with many of the classrooms of Montreal through its consultants, and can reach teachers through its publishing arm, it provides the project with some reach into the province's classrooms. As a result, this partnership will assist the project in developing a working relationship with the English- and French-language school boards and in developing material that is suitable to the Quebec curriculum.

Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (<http://doe.concordia.ca/csfp>) is a provincial centre for excellence in Quebec in the application of information and communication technologies to teaching and learning. The Centre will participate in the development of educational materials and provide additional research infrastructure for project activities.

National Film Board (<http://citizen.nfb.ca/onf/info>) - Our partnership is with the branch of the *NFB* that operates CITIZENShift which is described on its web site as "an interactive platform where you can explore social issues through: film, photography, articles, blogs and podcasts". The *NFB* has agreed to work with us to develop a web-based database of life story interviews to be housed on the Concordia server. As stated in another section, the partnership with the *NFB* will provide us with web-based software that is already developed. It will also greatly increase the public visibility of the project.

REFUGEE YOUTH WORKING GROUP (1 partner)

Canadian Council for Refugees (www.web.net/~ccr/) is a national umbrella organization that has advocated for refugee and immigrant rights in Canada since 1978. It holds regular national consultations and recently formed a youth network to encourage greater participation from refugee and immigrant youth. The working group held a "caucus" meeting at the *CCR*'s November 2006 consultation in Montreal. Youth from across Canada provided feedback to team members. Co-applicant Janet Dench, the Executive Director, has been an active member of the group since its inception. The *CCR* offers the project resources, contacts and experience. When the project team sought to employ an assistant to develop a comprehensive inventory of youth contacts, for example, it turned to the expertise of the *CCR*.

STAGING HUMAN RIGHTS/RITES WORKING GROUP (2 partners)

Teesri Duniya Theatre (www.teesriduniyatheatre.com) celebrated its twenty-fifth year of existence in 2006. This professional theatre company is dedicated to developing and producing socially and politically relevant plays that reflect the multicultural composition of Canada, promoting interculturalism through theatre, and creating theatrical styles based on the cultural experiences of visible minorities living in Canada. *Teesri Duniya* has produced over 25 major theatre productions including Rahul Varma's (a co-applicant) latest play *Bhopal* about Union Carbide's toxic spill that killed 8,000 within days. It will produce a series of plays flowing out of the project's workshops and interviewing.

Creative Alternatives (www.creative-alternatives.ca/ca) is a not-for-profit Creative Arts Therapies Centre that uses art, drama, music and dance to "raise awareness, propose alternatives, inspire healing, and motivate critical engagement in social change." It provides counseling services and opportunities for creative development. Its animators will assist in the performative workshops planned, at two month intervals, in years two and three of the CURA. *Creative Alternatives* will also assist in recruiting workshop participants in Montreal's South Asian and Middle Eastern communities.

TRAINING OF STUDENTS

The proposed Life Stories CURA will train a large number of university students (at both the graduate and undergraduate levels), as well as secondary school students, in life history research, interviewing, video editing, narrative analysis, transcription, ethics, documentary film-making, database construction (coding, tagging), web-based communication, community development, conference organization, dramaturgy, social computing, curriculum development as well as in project management and collaborative research. The most important thing that students will take away from their experience in the project, however, will be the expertise that they gained in a new paradigm of research premised on “sharing authority.” They will have had the unique opportunity to work with community members, not just as subjects of research, but as partners in research.

The project team has thought a great deal about the nature and degree of student involvement and the need to go beyond the usual reliance on the “research assistantship”. How do we ensure that students involved in the project are mentored? How do we coordinate and document student training? How can we carry the idea of “sharing authority” into the project’s orientation to students? We developed the following seven-point strategy to student training at our one day workshop:

1. *Project Certificate* - the project will develop a standardized “certification” that provides students and community members with the opportunity to experience the CURA project in its full breadth and depth. This certificate would indicate the skills developed. Project assistants, fellows, interns and a select number of volunteers would be eligible to undertake to do this. To facilitate matters, the project will designate a member of the project’s coordinating committee as the person responsible for coordinating our efforts in this area.
2. *Project Assistants* (3 undergrad, 23 masters and 27 doctoral students x 200 hours each over five years) – students will be employed at every stage of the project. Student interviewers, for example, will be working in teams alongside non-students recruited from the communities being studied. They will assist in audio/visual capturing, transcription, database coding and tagging and even translation. They will also play a major role in the collective storytelling initiatives that are proposed.
3. *Project Fellowships* – as part of its contribution to the project, the Faculty of Arts and Science at Concordia will provide two (2) \$8,000 fellowships each year to in-coming graduate students working on topics that relate directly to the project. Those students selected would be affiliated to the project as “Project Fellows”. Other graduate students doing research in this area will also be able to affiliate.
4. *Project Internships* – A number of undergraduate and graduate programs at Concordia provide an internship option to students. We would undertake to accept six internships each year and provide each student with a range of skills honed in the university and community environments.
5. *The University Classroom* –Starting in year two of the project, an interdisciplinary (and we hope inter-university) graduate seminar will be offered each year. While the specific themes will vary, the team-taught course will enable students to contribute directly to the project. At the undergraduate level, several courses are envisioned including a course in “Oral History and Performance: Staging Human Rights” to be co-taught in years four and five by High (History) and Little (Theatre).
6. *Secondary Students* –the project also intends to work extensively with secondary school students. The “Refugee Youth” working group, for example, will work with refugee and immigrant youth in the production of documentary videos. The “Stories in Education” working group, for its part, will work closely with teachers and their students in the development of curriculum materials.
7. *Training Infrastructure* - Our capacity to undertake student training is enhanced by the research infrastructure of the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling. The centre is equipped with dedicated training facilities and state-of-the-art digital labs. Students involved in the project will gain a unique skill-set (conceptual, technological, and social) that will make them stand out in the job market.

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Because “sharing authority” is easier said than done, the project has mapped out strategies that will enable community co-applicants and affiliated groups to be true partners in research. This commitment is evidenced in the proposed budget. As much as possible, we sought to provide community co-applicants and our partners with the resources necessary to participate fully in the project.

PERSONNEL COSTS

Student Salaries (\$18 per hour x 17.54% benefits = [insert total \$])

The project’s commitment to “sharing authority” is evident in our decision to employ an equal number of graduate students (54: 30 doctoral, 24 masters) and community members (54) on 200 hour contracts as project assistants, interviewers, transcribers, translators, community mobilizers, database builders, and workshop assistants. In this instance, “community members” refers to either non-university students from partner communities or university students nominated by community partners. Our goal is to share authority in the hiring process. In so doing, we hope that immigrant and refugee youth in particular will become fully involved in project research and acquire (or refine) a unique set of skills. To avoid unhelpful hierarchies, all project assistants will receive the same rate of pay (\$18).

CURA Project Assistants (Graduate Students), Years 1-5

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
10 - \$42,307	13 - \$54,999	12 - \$50,768	12 - \$50,768	7 - \$29,615

a) Project Assistants – Life Story Interviewing, Transcription and Video Editing, Coding and Tagging (database): 75 project assistantships – 200 hours each (37 graduate students, 38 community members)

The labour requirements of the project were calculated on the following basis:

Calculation #1: For every hour of recorded interview, there will be 6 additional hours required for transcription and two more hours for video editing, coding and tagging for a total of 9 paid hours/hour of video or audio. When paid at a standard rate of \$18 per hour, the total personnel costs required to process a single hour of recorded interview will be \$162, plus benefits.

Calculation #2: We estimated that the typical duration of a recorded life story interview will be 3.5 hours (in multiple sessions varying in length and number). Hence it will take 31.5 hours of labour to process each one of the 600 life stories or 18,900 hours in total. An additional 1,100 hours is added to cover additional time for recruitment, travel to people’s homes, and the time before and after the interview. TOTAL: 20,000 hours.

Calculation #3: Obviously, a great deal of interviewing and some transcription will be done by unpaid team members (applicant, co-applicants, collaborators, interns, others) - we estimate that 5,000 hours (or 1/4) will be accounted for this way.

TOTAL: This brings the total paid hours down to 15,000 hours or 75 project assistant positions (37 graduate students and 38 community members at 200 hours each). This is, by far, the most labour intensive part of the project.

b) Project Assistants – Other (33 assistantships x 200 hours each). The remaining 33 project assistants will be distributed along the following lines:

- Collective Storytelling Projects: 16 assistantships. These project assistants will work with the “Staging Human Rights/Rites” working group (interpretative workshops, media crew, etc), the “Life Stories in Education” working group (focus groups, memory bank, summer institutes, etc), the “Refugee Youth” Working Group (documentary film-making), as well as other co-creative activity (radio programming, etc).
- Web Master: 5 assistantships. These assistantships (one each year) will be responsible for maintaining the project web site.
- Translators: 8 assistantships. These assistants will translate project documents (French/English/other languages), assist in bilingual communications (internal/external), etc.
- Community Mobilization: 5 assistantships. These assistants will work with community partners, assist the advisory councils, and support the community documentation centres.

c) Project Assistants – Undergraduates (3 assistantships).

Two undergraduate students will be employed in year one and another in year three to assist in computer programming for the project. Most of the undergraduates involved in the project will be there as unpaid interns and as students enrolled in courses that are tied to the project.

Non-student salaries and benefits/Stipends - Other

Hourly Project Assistants (community members) – see the explanation above.

CURA Project Assistants (Community Members), Years 1-5

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
10 - \$42,307	13 - \$54,999	12 - \$50,768	12 - \$50,768	7 - \$29,615

Full-Time Project Coordinator (\$45,000 annually: \$225,000 total).

A full-time coordinator is necessary for a project of this size. The person, located in the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, will be responsible for day-to-day project coordination and administration, including bilingual communications (both external and internal). They will also manage the flow of interview data.

Part-Time Technologist (\$15,000 annually: \$75,000 total).

Due to the project’s heavy reliance on digital technologies, a part-time technologist will be needed. The \$15,000 per year will be used to employ a talented graduate student or community member for 10-12 hours per week in support of the digital needs of CURA team members. It should be noted that the resources of the oral history centre are limited and that technological support for the project is an absolute necessity.

RTS (course remission): \$70,000 (SSHRC Contribution is \$35,000)

The project has secured the agreement of Concordia’s Faculties of Arts and Science (5), and Fine Arts (1) as well as the Université de Montréal (1) to fund RTS course remissions. The seven faculty members being nominated were selected on the basis of their significant administrative responsibility and leadership roles within the project. Five of the six (Chalk, Fick, Little, Miller, Strobel) are working

group leaders with three of these (Chalk, Miller, Strobel) also serving on the project's coordinating committee. The sixth person (Semujanga), from the Université de Montréal, leads the "Great Lakes research cluster". The seventh person (Razlogova), a committee chair (technology) and co-director of the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, is nominated to enable her to coordinate the building of the project's life stories database, its web-site, and to assist in software development. As a Canada Research Chair, the applicant is not eligible for course remission. The proposed timing of the releases would be as follows: Little (year 1), Chalk (year 2), Fick (year 2), Miller (year 3), Strobel (year 3), Semujanga (year 4), and Razlogova (year 5).

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES (\$39,000)

The project has set aside \$31,000 for co-applicant travel and \$8,000 for student travel and subsistence expenses in years four and five. This investment will enable team members (community co-applicants, especially) to present project findings at academic and policy conferences in Canada and internationally.

OTHER EXPENSES:

Professional/Technical Services - Psychological Support (\$25,000).

Given the sensitive nature of the research, the Life Stories CURA team asks that \$5,000 per year be allocated for psychological support and counseling some of which will be used in year one to pay for specialized training workshops. This investment will ensure culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate support for project participants and team members.

Supplies (\$18,500)

The project has set aside \$12,400 over the five years to pay for an estimated 2,500 DV-Tapes (1 hour each), DVDs, CD-ROMs, film-making and photography supplies, performance workshop materials and the usual office supplies, mailing costs, and photocopying. Another \$6,500 is allocated to meet the software needs of the project. These include video editing software, project management software, and standard software (Office, Norton, Adobe Premier Elements, Adobe Audition) for the five computers.

Non-Disposable Equipment (\$28,750)

- **Computers, Scanners, printers (5): \$12,750.** Four of these systems will provide the research infrastructure for the proposed "Community Documentation Centres". The fifth system will be available at the oral history centre for the exclusive use of project members.
- **Audio (5 recorders, 5 mics): \$2,000** - additional audio recording equipment is needed to conduct life story interviews. One device will be allotted to each research cluster in the "Comparative Perspectives" group as well as one each to the Haitian Working Group and to the oral history centre for the exclusive use of CURA team members.
- **Video (5 videocameras with tripods): \$3,000** – additional video cameras with tripods are a necessity for the reasons stated above.
- **Server (\$11,000)**

The purchase of additional server space will be needed in order to upload a substantial number of audio or video taped interviews. Server space will be expanded, slightly, in year three of the project.

Other Expenses - Teacher Release (\$12,000)

The project's focus group (of 8-10 teachers) will meet 2-3 times per year in years 1, 2, 4 and 5. The money is needed to pay the school board for teacher releases (income substitution). The focus group will provide on-going feedback on the curriculum and instructional material for the entire project.

Other Expenses - Communication of Results (\$21,000)

In year five, the project will earmark \$21,000 for the communication of results. This line item will fund a wide-variety of non-travel related creative research activities including the development of

pedagogical materials, “life story photography” exhibition(s), seed money for theatrical performances, community-directed activities, and an end-of-project conference.

Other Expenses - Project Meetings (\$18,100)

The entire team will meet two times a year in the “project assembly”. It is important to the Research Alliance that simultaneous translation is provided at these meetings. Even in Montreal, the linguistic divide can widen the gap between team members, partners and communities. This line item will also pay for community meetings (particularly in year one), public lecture space, and pay for any fees incurred for other project meetings.

Other Expenses - Community Releases (“RTS”) - salary replacement (\$35,000)

We are requesting “community releases” for seven community co-applicants who have taken on substantial administrative/research roles in the project. This thirty-five thousand dollar expenditure over five years will be used to facilitate community involvement in project direction. Community co-applicants will be eligible for financial support of up to \$5,000 each. We strongly believe that this relatively small part of the budget will go a long way in enabling community co-applicants to be involved as full partners in research. The eligibility of community co-applicants will be determined on the same basis as RTS. The timing of the seven community releases mirrors that of RTS.

FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES (AND CORRESPONDING EXPENSES)

Concordia University -- CASH (\$85,000) - has agreed to contribute \$17,000 per year for five years for a total of \$85,000 cash as well as an additional \$5,000 to fund project activities from February to September 2007. The bulk of this revenue will be used to fund two \$8,000 “Life Stories CURA” fellowships each year (total: \$80,000) to doctoral or masters students whose proposed research projects would contribute directly to the project. Those grad students awarded a fellowship will be directly affiliated to the project. The remaining monies (\$1,000 per year) will be used to develop a project logo and for the public lecture series and related expenses. **In-Kind (\$70,000):** The non-cash contribution of Concordia University will be \$70,000 over the five year life of the project. This contribution will take the form of the use of existing facilities and equipment, space, extending library privileges to community co-applicants and non-student project assistants, server space, and media relations assistance. **RTS (\$30,000)** -- The University is also matching SSHRC funding for six faculty RTS releases (5 in Arts and Science and 1 in Fine Arts).

The Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (In-Kind \$55,000) – the Centre’s in-kind contribution will include the use of 10 digital video cameras, 5 digital audio recorders, still cameras, and scanners in the field. The centre’s 20 audio/video editing workstations will also be at the disposal of the project as will its video-conferencing room, interview room, and the oral history training facility equipped with another 16 computers (for workshops). An office in the Centre will also be provided to the CURA project coordinator and a desk for the technologist. The centre’s graduate student interns and other part-time student staff will assist in project administration and training.

Université de Montréal – RTS (\$5,000) – has agreed to match SSHRC funding for one faculty RTS release.

Other Community partners will be providing varying amounts of in-kind support to the project including use of meeting space, access to contact lists, assistance in training, use of computers, technological assistance in developing an on-line database (National Film Board), peer counseling, educational programming, and the time of community co-applicants and other community members. *Teesri Duniya Theatre*, for example, estimates that its in-kind contribution (see letter) will total 100,000\$. For its part, *Equitas* indicates that its in-kind contribution will be \$20,000 over five years.