

SACLP Overview



Dr. Satwinder Bains of the UFV South Asian Studies Institute MP and federal NDP party leader Jagmeet Singh attend the recent launch of the South Asian Canadian Legacy Project. (Photo by Darren McDonald, UFV)

UFV project brings awareness to South Asian history and contributions

South Asian Canadian Legacy Project in Abbotsford launched with \$1.14 million from province

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A project at University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) has been launched to raise awareness and knowledge of the contributions and history of South Asian Canadians.

The South Asian Canadian Legacy Project – through UFV’s South Asian Studies Institute in Abbotsford – is backed by a \$1.14 million grant from the province with support from the Abbotsford Community Foundation. It is part of the government’s response to community consultations on racism and hate conducted in 2019.

“The South Asian Canadian Legacy Project empowers British Columbians to discover, learn, research, and share the rich and robust histories of South Asian Canadians who helped build this beautiful province,” said Dr. Satwinder Kaur Bains, director at the UFV South Asian Studies Institute.

The initiative includes Saffron Threads (saffronthreads.ca) — a new learning resource for B.C. teachers from kindergarten to Grade 12 that explores South Asian Canadian history, culture, and heritage.

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It includes detailed activity plans and resources, developed in partnership with Open School BC, that will help teachers bring important topics for all students into the classroom including migration and settlement, discrimination, identity, and culture.

Archives that tell the stories of South Asian migration and contributions to Canada have found a new life as part of the legacy project.

The UFV South Asian Studies Institute has methodically digitized thousands of photos, documents, and videos from privately held collections to create the South Asian Canadian Digital Archive (sacda.ca).

The legacy project also includes a physical travelling exhibit that will visit all regions of B.C. over the next four years.

The bilingual exhibit titled Haq and History — “haq” meaning “rights” in Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu— was developed in a collaboration between UFV and the Royal BC Museum.

The exhibit explores themes of trans-Pacific journeys, families and homes, community celebrations and commemorations, sawmill experiences, and community activism for rights and justice.

As the exhibit travels, it will partner with local institutions and South Asian Canadian communities to add relevant local content with the goal of expanding the historic record.

An outreach kit that educators, schools, and community centres can use to teach content from Haq and History is also available. B.C. schools and organizations can request a kit through the Royal BC Museum.

Haq and History can be viewed in the atrium of the Surrey City Centre Library until June 30, 2022, before the exhibit makes its way across B.C.

Ground-breaking research is captured in Union Zindabad!, which chronicles the history of South Asian Canadians' involvement in the labour movement in partnership with the BC Labour Heritage Centre.

The project also undertook documentation and further engagement of historic sites of significance across the province.

As well, 19 authors came together to write chapters in A Social History of South Asians in British Columbia – a book that threads South Asian Canadian stories from 1897 to the present moment.

Visit threadingourstories.ca for more.



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