



## PRESS RELEASE

### TAPESTORY™ ICo (INTER-COMMUNITY) COHESION & WELLBEING THROUGH DIALOGUE & ART WORKSHOP

NOON-2 PM, SATURDAY, MARCH 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2017, SANDY SPRING MUSEUM, SANDY SPRING, MD



Weaving Inter-Community Cohesion & Wellbeing™

[www.tapestory.org](http://www.tapestory.org)



On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the *Sramani Institute* hosted its first **Tapestory™ ICo (Inter-Community) Cohesion & Wellbeing through Dialogue & Art Workshop** in an inspiring Exhibition Hall generously provided by the Sandy Spring Museum. Tapestory™ ICo Cohesion Workshops have the goal of countering the increasing divisiveness in our society by bringing individuals from diverse backgrounds together to innovatively guide them in co-creating oral and artistic tapestry(s)™ as they collaboratively explore their differences and find common ground through structured sharing.

The first Tapestory™ ICo Cohesion Workshop drew diverse participants with ancestral backgrounds from South Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, ages ranging from 10-75 years, and occupations covering the fields of service, trade, protection, and knowledge. Groups of 4-6 participants from different backgrounds sat around tables where they shared their unique perspectives and stories, found common ground through active listening and discussion, and co-created art in two guided interactive sessions. Each table was then asked to reflect on the questions the sessions had focused on. These were a few of the **table reflections**:

- “We had a lot more similarities than differences. It was really hard to find differences without finding similarities.”
- “We found that all of our families are grounded in a history of oral tradition and that we all look to our elders and ancestors for life lessons, wisdom, and story-telling.”
- “Diversity of experiences is important in self-development. By interacting with people of different races, religions, and cultures, it gives you more variables to improve yourself.”

At the end of the ICo Cohesion Workshop, participants were asked to make individual pledges (#tapestorypledge) as to how they would continue to weave Inter-Community Cohesion (ICo Cohesion) beyond the workshop. These were a few of the **individual pledges**:

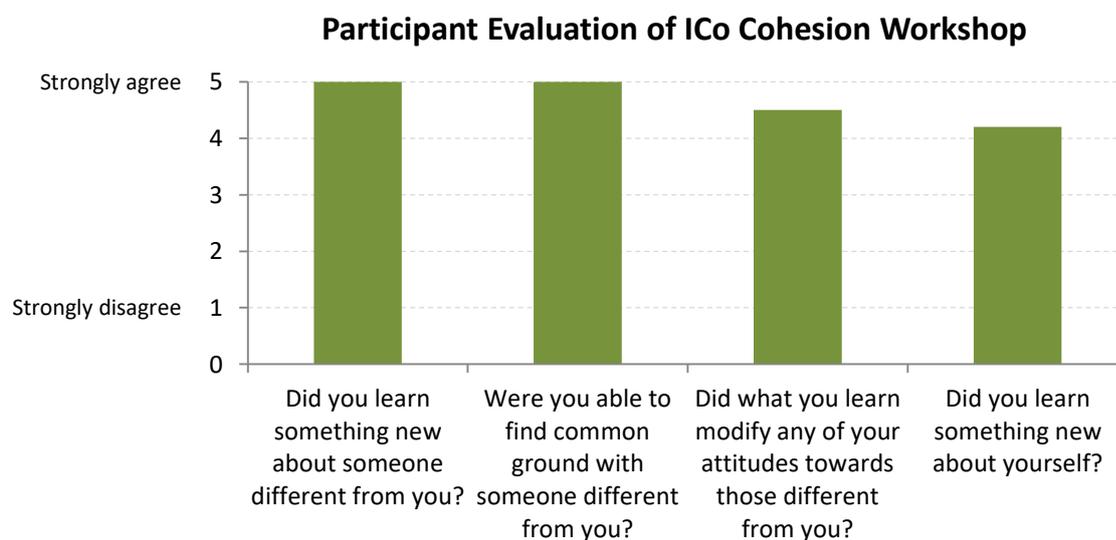
- “With people whom I think I know there really is a lot more that I should get to know about them. So I would like to spark conversations like these with them. In some ways I feel like I know people at this table more than I know people I’ve worked with for years.”
- “I will continue learning from other people.... I’m learning that knowledge is a lot more than having a degree in your hand.”



- “I will help to bring people together and make them comfortable so that they will talk to each other.”
- “I think we all see the turmoil and divisiveness and violence that are being perpetrated.... It can cause a lot of anxiety and stress. And I don't want to ever get to the point where I allow that to stop me from seeing the good in other people.”

The Tapestory™ ICo Cohesion Workshop was a great success as testified by the evaluations of the participants (see graph below). Participants were asked to respond to four questions by giving the Workshop a 1-5 rating, with 1 being ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 being ‘strongly agree’. The specific objectives of the Workshop with respect to participants were:

- learn something new about others who are different
- find common ground with others who are different
- modify attitudes (especially negative ones) toward others who are different
- learn something new about themselves



The *Sramani Institute* will be hosting its second **Tapestory™ ICo (Inter-Community) Cohesion & Wellbeing through Dialogue & Art Workshop** at the Sandy Spring Museum, on Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, from noon to 2 PM. To participate in the upcoming workshop *please obtain free tickets* from Eventbrite ([free tickets link](#)).

Tapestory™ ICo Cohesion Workshops are an integral part of the Tapestory™ initiative, which works to create a strong, peaceful society built on Inter-Community (ICo) Cohesion by encouraging understanding and collaboration among individuals and communities of diverse backgrounds so that together we can transform adversity into wellbeing. Other projects of the Tapestory™ initiative include: (1) the [comm-UNITY blog](#), which serves as a community resource for collecting *Stories of Adversity & Resilience* and diverse perspectives on ICo Cohesion; and (2) Inter-Faith-Knowledge-Practice (IFKP) work to understand in-depth, and then share this understanding, of the conceptual frameworks of diverse communities and professions, such as Native American, Dharmik, physicists, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, economists, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, biologists, etc.

For more information on the Tapestory™ initiative, visit [www.tapestory.org](http://www.tapestory.org) and follow the initiative on twitter and Instagram (@tapestoryshare) and on Facebook (/tapestoryshare). To host a Tapestory™ ICo Cohesion Workshop in your community write to [tapestory@sramani.org](mailto:tapestory@sramani.org). To learn more about the *Sramani Institute* visit [www.sramani.org](http://www.sramani.org).