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### Stories for Society:

- is a Swedish-based non-profit organization renewing the art of story-telling for learning and social transformation.
- seeks continually to develop and share its method for facilitating group story-making around complex social issues, particularly those that relate to inclusion and collaboration.
- was founded in 2010 after an extended period of consultation with experts concerning social need, concepts and tools.

### The Island Method

Stories for Society's principal tool, was developed by experts over a decade and emerged from the desire to support social and emotional health among children and youth. With time, it became clear that the method was also useful to adult groups in different types of organizations. The method, which is documented in a detailed manual, provides a basic framework for creating common stories to address issues that may otherwise be difficult to discuss using a theoretical approach. The method integrates story-making in words, images and dramatization.

It facilitates:

- a holistic examination of an issue/theme in order to reveal different perspectives, expand vocabulary and deepen understanding;
- the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, including creativity, critical thinking, empathy/compassion, leadership and teamwork.

Fantasy and play are integrated into the method in order to provide:

- a forum for coming up with new ideas;
- a safe space in which own experiences can be projected without harm to oneself or others.

The method is supportive of:

- **school curricula:** Teachers can use the method as a fun tool for deepening comprehension in various subject-matter areas and create cross-curricular projects. It provides the opportunity to work in a formative way with students' skills and meet each student at his/her level of development. The method is easily adapted to existing schedules and resources.
- **organizational needs:** internal and external communication issues can be addressed by creative and non-confrontational means.
- **special needs:** our projects have repeatedly demonstrated that the inclusive nature of our method allows for special needs students not only to participate, but also to shine.

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## Projects

Since 2009, Stories for Society has worked with schools, youth centers, non-profit and public sector organizations in a series of story-making projects focused on topics relating to social inclusion and collaboration. Our facilitators have guided story-making processes among children and youth, and trained teachers and youth leaders. The method, with adaptations, is also suited to adult groups.

- 2009-2011 Munsö School, Ekerö, Sweden, “Alla är lika men olika” (Everyone is the same but not the same) “Angår du mig?” (Are you important to me?) – facilitated story-making and trained school staff.
- 2010 – Skytteholms School, Solna, “Sammanhållning” (Togetherness/Cohesion) – facilitated story-making.
- 2011 – Raoul Wallenbergs School/US Embassy, “Stories of Peace & Moderation” – facilitated story-making.
- 2011- Skolforum (Scandinavia’s largest school expo.) – Chosen to participate as one of Sweden’s most innovative school projects.
- 2013 – Order of the Teaspoon and teachers from twenty Swedish schools, “Who are you?” – teacher training.
- 2013 – Norwegian Peace Corps – External Communications – facilitated story-making among staff.
- 2014-15 – Most Mira/Swedish Institute, “Peace-building through the Arts in Bosnia-Herzegovina” – facilitated story-making, and trained teachers and youth leaders.
- 2016-17 – Fryshuset/Rights Now Foundation, “Our Story” concerning social inclusion, Teacher and Youth Leader Training – trained teachers and youth leaders.

Notes on most recent projects:

In 2014-15 Stories for Society collaborated with Most Mira (Bridge of Peace), a Bosnian non-profit organization, in order to bring group story-making to areas of marginalized northern Bosnia. Ethnic segregation is a politicized issue in these areas which have not recovered from the war of the 1990s. One of the outputs of this Swedish Institute-sponsored project, was “The Story of the Stranger,” a story in which youth, who themselves felt alienated in their own communities, explored the concept of who the stranger is and how he/she is treated by the society.

Stories’ 2016-17 project with Fryshuset, the world’s largest youth center, focused on the topic of inclusion. Fryshuset’s school and youth center works in socio-economically challenged areas, including those where there are many refugees from war-torn countries.

## Feedback

Each of Stories for Society's projects integrates feedback mechanisms from stakeholders, which form the basis for evaluation. The results are wide-ranging, but overall point to increased willingness and capacity to collaborate, and internalization of the topic/theme. The absence of a culturally limited attitude in our approach can be attributed to our rules of engagement which emphasize possibility, openness and caring.

- "The Island Method was a great way to work with young people because it opens you up to a different world of thinking and working. It makes an experience out of the sentence, 'It all depends on the perspective.' There is huge scope to incorporate inclusion training into schools – teaching children about diversity." – Middle School Teacher, Fryshuset, Sweden
- "Your project will have a powerful potential to change narrow attitudes into more constructive world perspectives. Furthermore, I value that you don't have a western-centric attitude, but a respectful validation of the various states the (people) come from and exist in. This makes the project more valuable than other similar projects I have seen." - Imam Abd al Haqq Kielan, Imam of the mosque in Eskilstuna, Sweden and The Islamic Association in Stockholm

## Board & Advisors

Stories for Society was founded by author and educator Julie Lindahl in 2010 following her experience of reading and discussing classic children's literature with children as an after school activity. Julie was joined by several experts within child psychology, child entertainment, education, coaching, consultancy and the visual arts to develop The Island Method and to form Stories for Society's board.

Julie Lindahl holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Wellesley College, USA; an M.Phil. in International Relations from Oxford University and was a Fulbright Scholar. She is the author of several books, mainly in the memoir genre. See [www.julielindahl.com](http://www.julielindahl.com).

For information on Stories for Society's facilitators and advisors, please visit [www.storiesforsociety.com](http://www.storiesforsociety.com).