

Background Research

My overarching idea for my ISEA project is to create a community-based platform that first and second generation immigrants can share their food recipes and accompanying anecdotes on. Since my topic relies heavily on the community aspect of immigrants, I focused my research on the areas of community sharing platforms and ethnic awareness. The root problem that I'd like to address is the underlying stigma of shame in weakness and failure for immigrants and their children. Based on the PBS article about the alarmingly high rates of depression in Asian American women, I've found that the immense pressure to meet the high standards of those who came before us, coupled with the increasing competitiveness in the academic and professional world, has created an atmosphere of suppression and disconnect from our elders (Nikolchev, 2010). Anything from academic failure to mental illness is embedded as a taboo for people like my parents and myself. The reasons behind this is that immigrants escape from so much conflict, and start from so little, that there is little room for error or distraction. Asian American cultures also place heavy emphasis on familial bonds, rather than individual well-being (Nikolchev, 2010). We don't share with our parents nearly enough, and we can't go to them for emotional reassurance either. I want to counter this by starting a simple narrative for my and my parents' generations, over a topic that everyone can relate to: food.

I also found another solution that is similar in intent but different in execution. Project Enye is a short series documentary project that works to bring awareness to the Enyes people, defined as first-generation American-born Latino (Hamilton, 2015). The project aims to build community among a group of people who don't realize that they have this community of people

to fall back on. Each episode in the mini-series features a different Enye story (Hamilton, 2015). I want to emulate the same feeling of community realization and engagement in my project.

As per Glenda's suggestion, I also researched the Conflict Kitchen, a restaurant that specializes in changing their menu based on ethnic cuisines from countries with which the US is in conflict (Conflict Kitchen, 2017). They do an amazing job of both celebrating the diverse culture of a little-known place, while also bringing awareness to political ongoing issues. Conflict Kitchen uses the aspects of food and social exchange to inspire general discussion about countries and cultures that they might not know much about (Conflict Kitchen, 2017). Similarly, I want to create a platform that can host recipes and stories, but also create conversation about new aspects of cultures that the users may not be familiar with, and strengthen the bonds that already exist among members of the community.

## Bibliography

"About." Conflict Kitchen. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Feb. 2017.

Hamilton, Kaitlin. "Project Enye: Forming a Community of First Generation American Born Latinos." Communities Digital News. N.p., 28 June 2015. Web. 09 Feb. 2017.

Nikolchev, Alexandra. "Among Asian-American Women, a Little Known Battle with Depression." PBS. PBS, 12 Oct. 2010. Web. 09 Feb. 2017.