

Summary of Strategic Directions Retreat for San Diego Refugee Forum

Purpose of the Refugee Forum

The retreat began with a discussion on the purpose of the *San Diego Refugee Forum*. During this process, participants identified current strengths of the Forum and areas they would like to see the Forum grow into, which was identified as future strengths. A theme from the discussion on the purpose was that the Refugee Forum provides organizations with the opportunities and tools they need to empower refugees in San Diego.

Current Strengths

- ✓ Offering opportunities for information exchange
- ✓ Providing support for individual or new organizations
- ✓ Mentoring new organizations
- ✓ Networking opportunities/building relationships
- ✓ Serving as a marketplace of ideas
- ✓ Providing letters of support for each other (like for grants)
- ✓ Serving as a connecting point for the refugee community
- ✓ Serving as a voice for the refugee community

Future Strengths

- Educating the public/Promoting awareness about issues facing refugees
- Advocacy
- Developing more inclusive terminology (like adding asylees, parolees etc)
- Fostering a spirit of collaboration amongst refugee organizations
- Sharing resources & referrals
- Influencing policy changes
- Serving as a unified voice for the refugee community

SPECIFIC GOALS & OUTCOMES

A. Information Exchange

1. (Goal) Resource Directory: Develop a resource directory that includes all member organizations of the refugee forum to be used to provide referrals and other useful information by 3/31/08.
 - a) (Objective) Identify a point person to collect all the organizational information needed for the resource directory by October meeting.
 - b) (Objective) Collect the data by 12/31/07 including phone numbers, address, services provided, and contact person.

Suggestions for implementation: Change the Forum membership form to include the necessary information for the resource directory. Eventually add support or secondary organizations that help refugees (not necessarily members of the Forum).

2. (Goal) On-Line Directory: Develop an on-line version of the Directory.
 - a) (Objective) Secure a domain name for the Forum ASAP. (Ralph Achenbach from IRC will do this by 9/25/07).
 - b) (Objective) Develop a design for the on-line directory by 3/31/08. (Ralph will spearhead this too).

B. Mentoring

No specific goals identified under mentoring. Instead, participants stated that they wanted the Refugee Forum to create a welcoming environment for new organizations. Other related goals are listed under Outreach.

C. Networking

(Internally, networking seems to be working well. There should be more of a focus on the external networking of the Forum).

1. (Goal) Increase paid membership by 50% by December 2008.

- a) (Objective) Add a quarterly update to the agenda about new memberships.
- b) (Objective) Add a blurb to the membership form about “being members of the Forum includes reaching out to new members to increase the membership base”

Suggestion for implementation: Add a structured time to the Forum agenda quarterly to allow for networking.

D. Referrals

- 1. (Goal) Make the Resource Directory referral-friendly so that staff using the directory can easily refer refugees to other organizations within the Forum.
 - a) (Objective) Organize the Resource Directory by geographic location and by services offered.

Suggestion for implementation: Add a time to the Forum agenda to follow-up on referrals.

E. Advocacy/Tackle Challenges Faced by Refugees or Organizations within the Forum

- 1. (Goal) Task new leadership with developing a process of identifying and prioritizing the challenges faced by refugees or organizations within the Forum by 6/30/08.
 - a) (Objective) Establish an Advocacy/Public Policy committee
 - b) (Objective) Committee drafts a process for addressing challenges.
 - c) (Objective) Committee develops a process for responding to short-term issues and long-term issues.

Suggestion for implementation: Vote on the long-term advocacy issue to be tackled at the annual election meeting.

F. Inclusive Terminology for the Forum

1. (Goal) Develop an inclusive tag-line for the Forum by 12/31/07

*Suggestion for implementation: **The Refugee Forum: A united voice for all those who come to San Diego for refuge.***

G. Outreach & Education (Promote Awareness)

1. (Goal) Establish an Outreach and Education committee by 12/31/07 that spearheads the effort to help Forum members make connections with other organizations, recruit new members, and educate the public about issues facing refugees. The committee will spearhead this effort but all members of the Forum are expected to participate in outreach, education and recruiting new members.

Suggestion for implementation: Do outreach to other organizations and institutions that interface with refugees like schools, police etc.

2. (Goal) Establish an Event committee by 2/28/08 to plan an annual event by end of 2008. The purpose of this event is to provide opportunities for networking, information exchange, outreach, education, fostering the spirit of collaboration and realizing the overall vision of the Forum.

Suggestions for implementation: Refugee Awareness day or World Refugee Day, Recognition Ceremony for individuals or organizations who make a difference to refugees, Annual Refugee Community Conference etc.

H. Foster Spirit of Collaboration

Suggestions for implementation: Identify gaps that exist in services for refugees and seek collaborative grants.

-  Look to other collaborative models.
-  Showcase successful collaborations

- ✚ Encourage Forum organizations to sponsor open houses or meetings at their agency.

I. Mission/Vision

1. (Goal) Update the mission & vision of the Refugee Forum to reflect the ideas generated from the strategic directions retreat.
 - a) (Objective) Distribute the bylaws of the Refugee Forum by the October meeting.
 - b) (Objective) Share the strategic directions report to all Forum members by October meeting.
 - c) (Objective) Re-visit the current vision/mission at the October meeting.
 - d) (Objective) Convene an ad-hoc committee to revise the vision/mission and submit a draft to everyone by 12/31/07