

## General Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 19, 2017 10:30 am to 12:00 pm  
International Rescue Committee (IRC) – 5348 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92105

### 1. *Call to order at 10:30 am*

**Present:** Abby Maayah, Alexander Medvinsky, Andrea Frost, Awichu Akwanya, Bethlehem Degu, Brandon Scott, Carmen Kcomt, Charity White, Deborah Lee, Deona Dorsey, Diana Rhoads, Elizabeth Castro, Elizabeth Lou, Emily Brown, Eric Miller, Hafifa Siddiq, Ilena Gudino, Jackie Mola, Jamie Schoer Colbert, Jane Hoey, Justin Mudekoreza, Kate Morrissey, Katia Garcia, Kelly Wraight, Kim Thomas, Laura Alessio, Laurel Dalsted, Ler Vah Do, Lucia Acevedo, Madeline Kristoff, Madelyne Wagner, Maggie Fenn, Mahvash Alami, Maria Kelly Horsely, Misty Jones, Nancy Cordova, Nawal Alkatib, Neil Hovland, Oliver Cabara, Oren Robinson, Rahwa Weldeselase, Rebecca Miranda, Rebecca Paida, Rita Shamon, Tiffany Tang, Virginia Magnus, Will James and William Ackermann

### 2. *Executive Committee Announcements and Participate Introductions*

- a. Rebecca Paida opened the meeting and announced that there has been a temporary change to the Executive Committee. Laurel Dalsted is acting Vice-Chair and Madelyne Wagner is acting Secretary until the November elections.
- b. Oren Robinson announced that there are 57 active Refugee Forum members. The benefits of being a Refugee Forum member include being able to vote and participate in the task forces.
- c. The annual officer elections will take place in November for the Vice Chair and Secretary position, along with a vote for proposed changes to the by-laws.

### 3. *Task Force Updates*

- a. **Advocacy Task Force:** The Advocacy Task Force has been working on participating in national mobilizing efforts around the upcoming Supreme Court decision on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The task force will meet again on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2 PM at Alliance for African Assistance.
- b. **Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force:** No updates
- c. **Domestic Violence Task Force:** No updates
- d. **Employment Task Force:** The Employment Task Force elected two new Co-Chairs: Ilena Gudino and Deona Dorsey. The Employment Task Force will meet on October 9<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM at the Alliance for African Assistance. The task force plans to bolster more employment events and engage more employers in their meetings.
- e. **Health Task Force:** The Health Task Force will meet on Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM at Nile Sisters Development Initiative.
- f. **World Refugee Day:** No updates

### 4. *Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs) Arrival Data and Updates*

- a. **Alliance for African Assistance:** Alliance for African Assistance has 28 arrivals for the month of August, all SIVs from Afghanistan and Iraq. They expect 18 arrivals for the month of September with a mixed immigration status.

- b. **Catholic Charities:** No representative present.
  - c. **International Rescue Committee:** International Rescue Committee had 9 arrivals for the month of August, mostly from Iraq and Afghanistan. They expect 5 arrivals for the month of September from Iraq, Kazakhstan and Somalia.
  - d. **Jewish Family Services:** Jewish Family Services had 17 cases for the month of August, mostly from Iraq and Afghanistan. They have 3 cases for the month of September, two of which were self-travel SIVs.
- 5. **County Agencies and Committees**
  - a. **County (Abdi Abdillahi):** San Diego had 100 arrivals for the month September (49 Afghan, 1 Cuban, 12 Congolese, 1 Ethiopian, 12 Haitian, 1 Iranian and 24 Iraqi). San Diego County has had 2,557 arrivals for the Federal Fiscal Year (Oct '16-Aug '17).
  - b. **State Advisory Committee (Mohammad Tuama):** The State Advisory Committee met in August, in person, at the Refugee Summit. This was the first meeting with the new community member, Kathi Anderson of Survivors of Torture, International. There are currently two community members from San Diego on the committee.
    - i. The state of California has \$10 million in funding for the schools impacted with refugees. Mohammad recommended working with the refugee community to discuss how to spend this money.
    - ii. There will not be a State Advisory Committee in September. Information regarding the next SAC meeting will be emailed out to the Refugee Forum.
- 6. **Focus Presentation: What to Know About Your Library by Misty Jones of the San Diego Public Library, City of San Diego**
  - a. The library is FREE all of the time. Every single thing that they offer is free to the San Diego Community.
  - b. The City of San Diego has 35 branches and about 7 million people visited the libraries in 2016.
  - c. **Programs/Services:**
    - i. Story Time: For youth 1-5 years old to ensure that kids are able to read by the time they enter kindergarten.
    - ii. Free internet and Wi-Fi at all locations
    - iii. Read San Diego: For illiterate adults and new Americans. This program will teach individuals how to read and write in English, as well as math skills.
    - iv. U.S. Citizenship classes and GED programs
    - v. Career Online High School: Accredited high school diploma program
    - vi. Seven International Book Clubs
    - vii. Do Your Homework at the Library: Tutors and volunteers at 18 different locations to tutor children after school (6,000 students came through this program last year).
    - viii. STEAM: Program focused on getting young people focused on careers in science, technology, engineering, arts and math. This is a two-month program and reached over 1,000 children.

- ix. IDEA Lab: Multimedia lab designed to prepare teens for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs by exposing them to new technology.
  - x. Wet Lab: Biology lab in La Jolla
  - xi. Innovation Lab: 3D printing and scanning, silhouette cameos, vinyl cutter, sewing and embroidery machines, milling machine, laser cutter, maker classes and workshops
  - xii. Early Literacy: Program to make sure children reach grade level reading by 4th Grade.
  - xiii. Computer Classes
  - xiv. Resume Writing
  - xv. Family for Literacy Programs: Brings family unit together to engage in reading as a family.
  - xvi. Genealogy: Genealogy resources online
  - xvii. E-books, Audiobooks and Magazines can be downloaded online as well
  - xviii. College Prep Academy: Jump Start on College Admission Program
  - xix. I CAN!: Library services for persons with accessibility needs
  - xx. Online articles, encyclopedias, business plan handbooks, tutoring, investment sources, car repair manuals, Rosetta Stone (offered in 30 Languages)
  - xxi. Museum Passes that can be checked out
  - xxii. Instructor-Led Courses in a variety of topics
  - xxiii. Memory Lab
  - xxiv. Augmented and Virtual Reality
7. *Spotlight Presentation: Overview of New Neighbor Relief by Justin Mudekereza, Executive Director*
- a. New Neighbor Relief helps refugees start and transition their lives in America.
  - b. Three Programs:
    - i. Learning English – help refugees learn English through a program they call “Daily Dose.” Daily Dose is a conversation English program aimed to help refugees use what they learn in their ESL courses in actually conversations with mentors.
    - ii. Job Development – help refugees attend “Welfare to Work” orientation and appointments and partner with service businesses that can potentially hire refugees.
    - iii. Transportation – provide transportation support by helping refugees acquire public transit passes, giving away bicycles, rides to appointments and help studying and preparing for drivers permit and license.
8. *Community Updates:*
- a. The San Diego District Attorney’s office is conducting needs assessments.
  - b. There will be a job fair on October 26<sup>th</sup> for skilled new comers (doctors, engineers, teachers, etc.). This job fair for skilled new comers is the first of its kind. Mohammad Tuama will send an email to the Refugee Forum with the details.



- c. United Women of East Africa is hosting a Suicide Prevention training on Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3-6 PM at City Heights Center 4305 University Avenue, Suite 640, San Diego, CA 92105.
- d. Nile Sisters Development Initiative is hosting an event: Refugee Crisis: Spotlight on South Sudan on Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-5:00 PM at The San Diego Foundation. Tickets are sold out, but the event can be streamed online.

**Adjournment: 12:00 pm**

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at 10:30 AM at the International Rescue Committee.