Let us creatively harness the diverse cultural and economic assets of Rock Island's refugees and immigrants for the enrichment of all the community, while acknowledging the challenges of multiple languages, customs and adequate support systems.

The Final Report for the series of Study Circles and Action Forum that will help Rock Island move toward community change.

Neighborhood Partners of Rock Island & Changing Faces Pilot Group
Neighborhood Partners is a city-initiated and coordinated partnership that builds stronger working relationships among neighborhoods, city government, service agencies, schools, churches and businesses. Since 1996 the organization has assembled the talents of volunteer citizens and city and agency staff to improve the quality of life and pride in Rock Island through education, resident self-sufficiency and enhanced, user-friendly services. Neighborhood Partners task forces bring together neighborhood associations, agencies, city staff and other dynamic citizens to build on positive achievements or solve mutual community problems.

Neighborhood Partners is proud to have sponsored the Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island study circle process and to have initiated Action Teams to assist in the implementation of ideas generated from this public dialogue.

To learn more about Neighborhood Partners, visit www.rigov.org.

A Few Words From Mayor Dennis Pauley

Rock Island has a long tradition of innovation, involvement and inclusion. Knowing that our population has been changing recently, with an influx of immigrants and refugees speaking a wide variety of languages and representing many cultures, the City acknowledged the need to address the challenges faced by our newest residents. We also understand some of the impacts these families have on City and School District services and facilities, with more than 30 languages and dialects spoken in our schools and our Police and Fire Department personnel serving people who have not received such services in the past.

In order to better identify the full range of issues, to involve the widest variety of people, to identify gaps in services and to determine how to address unmet needs, the City used a unique and useful tool – Study Circles. The City appreciates the time, commitment, involvement, energy and willingness of all who participated in the Study Circles and Kick-Off meetings and the Action Forum. There is no doubt that the outcome of this process will result in positive changes for Rock Island and all of its residents.

On behalf of the City of Rock Island, thank you!

Dennis E. Pauley
Mayor

Everyday Democracy is a national organization that helps local communities find ways for all kinds of people to think, talk and work together to solve problems. This organization works with neighborhoods, cities and towns, regions, and states, helping them pay particular attention to how racism and ethnic differences affect the problems they address.

For information about how to create large-scale dialogue-to-action programs that engage hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of residents, visit www.everyday-democracy.org.

Special Thanks to the following individuals from Everyday Democracy:

- Gloria Francesca Mengual, Program Officer and Diversity & Inclusions Officer
- John Landesman, Senior Associate
- Nick Connell, former Community Assistance Associate
- Sarah Eisele-Dyrl, Research Associate

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Rock Island is in the midst of change as affordable housing, job opportunities, successful resettlement programs and responsive social services have made the Quad Cities attractive for refugees and immigrants. With the establishment of several ethnic groups in the area, secondary migration has also become a factor in the expanding refugee and immigrant population.

Neighborhood Partners of Rock Island, with the cooperation of the Rock Island City Council, Community Caring Conference and Doris & Victor Day Foundation, sponsored a public dialogue called Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island. This dialogue, inspired by the national organization EveryDay Democracy, took the form of a series of facilitated discussions called study circles, which met during the spring of 2011.

Organizers for the study circles recognized that the challenges are great, but so are the opportunities. They created a process that encouraged discussion about this topic between and among long-tenured citizens, immigrants and refugees. A kick-off with keynote speakers framed the issue on a national, state and local basis. Once the eight circles began, 129 participants were asked to relate personal experiences and get to know each other in a comfortable and non-threatening atmosphere. Next, each circle was asked to discuss how Rock Island is changing, the impact of that change on persons and services, and the best approaches to manage change. Lastly, the groups brainstormed ideas about what individuals, small groups and institutions could do to confront the challenges and build opportunities.

Participants and the organizers evaluated the study circle process at its conclusion. The survey revealed much about the participants, their characteristics, and their overwhelmingly positive opinions on the study circle process.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island concluded with an Action Forum, where each study circle presented its top two or three ideas for action, and then those assembled voted on their favorite topics. This voting helped to create a set of priorities and narrowed the ideas so task-focused action teams could be created.

The top priorities from the Action Forum are listed below in summarized statements:

⇒ Establish a community center for refugees;
⇒ Increase awareness and celebration of diverse cultures through education and artistic civic engagement;
⇒ Establish a central clearinghouse of information/referrals;
⇒ Provide a housing advocate/representative when refugees/immigrants go to sign leases;
⇒ Study education issues as relating to the school district, Black Hawk College and potential Newcomer School/Center;
⇒ Create a forum for positive interaction between police/authorities and immigrants/refugees; and
⇒ Provide one-stop services for information and support and to build community, perhaps through the creation of a City department or committee.

Five Action Teams will work over the next six months to achieve these priorities, with a report back to the study circle participants taking place on December 1, 2011. It is expected this will be just the beginning of ongoing discussions among long-time Rock Island neighbors and our newest immigrant and refugee residents, who all seek to improve the quality of life in our community.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Rock Island iriko iragenda ihinduka cane kubera yuko hari amazu ahendutse, utuzi tuboneka cane kandi hakaba hari n, imishinga yakir, impunzi ndetse nibindi bintu bifite akamaro nk, amasengero namazu ahendutse bikaba aribyo bikurura abantu. Kandi kuba hari impunzi nabanyakahanga benshi baturuka mubihugu bitandukanaye byatumye abantu benshi bimuka bava muma state yabo bazamuri Rock Island ibyo byatumye umubare w, impunzi n, abanyakahanga wiyongera.


Bimwe mubintu biffitakamaro bahisemo nibi bikurikira.

⇒ Gufungura centre y, impunzi
⇒ Gutanga ubwisesure abantu bo mumico itandukananye bakayerekana mumbyino, ubukoriri no mubindi bikorwa ndangamuco.
⇒ Gufungura centre aho abantu bazajya babariza amakuru
⇒ Gushyiraho umuntu ugomba gufasha impunzi impunzi nabanyakahanga gusinya amasezerano y, amazu.
⇒ Amakuru ahajyje kubijanye n, amashuri. Urugero: Black Hawk College n, ishuri raabantu bashyashya.
⇒ Gukora ihuriro rigizwe na police, impunzi, n, abanyakahanga
⇒ Gutegura committee izajya ifasha abantu kumena amakuru atandukananye

Amagurupe atanu azakora mumezi atandatu arimbere kugirango abashe gushyira ibyategwe mungiro kandi ikazatanga raporo mu nama izaba kwi taliki zuwzwezi kwa 12/1/2011. Bikaba biteganywa yuko iyi izaba ari ntangiriro yibiganiro mubantu batuye Rock Island, abanyakahanga hamwe ni mpunzi zituye hano kugirango bashakire hamwe ukuntu batezimbere ubuzima bwa hano muri Communautte dutuyemo.
Rock Island está en el medio del cambio como cubierta comprable, trabajo las oportunidades, los programas acertados del restablecimiento y los servicios sociales responsivos han hecho las ciudades del patio atractivas para los refugiados y el inmigrante. Con el establecimiento de varios grupos étnicos en el área, la migración secundaria también se ha convertido en un factor en la población de extensión del refugiado y del inmigrante.

Socios de la vecindad de Rock Island, con la cooperación de Rock Island City Council, Conferencia del Cuidado de Comunidad y fundación De Victor Day, patrocinó un diálogo público llamado Cara Cambiantes: Refugiados & Inmigrantes en Rock Island, este diálogo, inspirado por la Democracia Diaria de la Organización Nacional, tomó la forma de una serie de discusiones facilitadas llamadas los círculos de estudio, que se encontraron durante el resorte de 2011.

Los organizadores para los círculos de estudio reconocieron que los desafíos son grandes, pero así que son las oportunidades. Crearon un proceso entre el cual encourged la discusión sobre este asunto y entre ciudadanos, inmigrantes y refugiados largo-ejercidos. Un saque de centro con los ponente que marca la tónica enmarcó la edición en un nacional, un estado y una base local. Una vez que los ocho círculos comenzaron, pidieron 129 participantes relacionar experiencias personales y familiarizarse con en una atmósfera cómoda y sin amenazando. Después, cada círculo fue pedido discutir cómo Rock Island está cambiando, el impacto de ese cambio en personas y servicios, y los mejores acercamientos para manejar el cambio. Pasado, los grupos se inspiraron ideas sobre qué individuos, pequeños grupos e instituciones podrían hacer para enfrentar los desafíos y para construir oportunidades.

Los participantes y los organizadores evaluaron el proceso del círculo de estudio en su conclusión. El examen reveló mucho sobre los participantes, sus características, y sus opiniones positivas abrumadoras sobre el proceso del círculo de estudio.

Cara Cambiantes: Refugiados & Inmigrantes en Rock Island concluido con un foro de la acción, donde cada círculo de estudio presentó sus dos o tres ideas superiores para la acción, y entonces esos montaron votado sobre sus asuntos preferidos. Esto el voicing ayudado para crear un sistema de prioridades y enangostados las ideas así que los equipos enfocados tachuela de la acción podría ser creada.

Los priorites superiores del foro de la acción son mencionados abajo en declaraciones resumidas:

⇒ Establezca un centro de la comunidad para los refugiados.
⇒ Aumente el conocimiento y la celebración de culturas diversas con la educación y el contrato cívico artístico.
⇒ Estableció una cámara de compensación central de la información/ remisiones
⇒ Proporcione a un abogado de la cubierta/respensentante cuando los refugiados/los inmigrantes van a firmar arriendos.
⇒ Estudie las ediciones de la educación como referente el distrito escolar, la Universidad De Blackhawk y la escuela el recién llegado del potencial/al centro.
⇒ Cree un foro para la interacción positiva entre la policia/las autoridades y los inmigrantes/los refugiados:
⇒ Y proporciona los servicios de una parada para la información y los apoya y construir la comunidad, quizás a través de la creación de un departamento o de un comité de ciudad.

Cinco equipos de la acción trabajarán durante los seis meses próximos para alcanzar estas prioridades, con un informe de nuevo a los participantes del círculo de estudio que ocurren el 1 de diciembre, 2011. Se espera que este sea apenas el principio de discusiones en curso entre vecinos del tiempo largo y nuestros más nuevos inmigrantes y residentes de los refugiados, que toda la búsqueda para mejorar la calidad de vida en nuestra comunidad.
Kisiwa cha Rock ki katika harakati za mabadiliko kutokana na upangaji wa bei nafuu fursa za kazi, program zilizofuza za kubadilishia makao ya watu pamoja na huduma za kijamii ambazo zinatia fora; vyote hivi vinweze kuleta mabadiliko katika maji ya Quad ambayo kwa sasa yanapendeza wakimbizi na wahamiaji. Kutokana na uanzishwaji wa makundi mbalimbali ya kidibila katika eneo hili, uhamaji wa pili umweze kuwa pia swala lakuilikiwa maanani katika kuongeza katika idadi ya wakimbizi na wahamiaji.


Washiriki pamoja na wapangiliani waliweza kutathmini mchakato ule wa duara ya masomo katika awamu ya hitimisho. Usoroovea huu uliweza kufichua mengi kuhusu washiriki, sifa zao, na hata maoni yao mazuri yaliyozidi na kukithiri kuhusu mchakato wa masomo ya duara.

Kubadilisha Sura: Wakimbizi na Wahamiaji katika Kisiwa cha Rock iliweza kuhiitimisha kikao chake kwenyewe Mdashalo wa Hatua, pale ambapo kila duara ya masomo iliweza kuwasilisha dhana zake bora mbili au tatu ambazo zinafa kuchukuliwa hatua, na kisha wale walikuwa wamewekwa pamoja kugipia kura katika mada yao wapendayo. Upigai kura huu uliweza kusaidia kuunda kundi la mazingatio na kuweza kulinga zaaidi dhana zinazopatia kipaumbele hatua kutoka kwa makundi hukisa ambayo yalianzishwa.

Mazingatio maku wa kutoka katika Mdashalo wa Hatua yamweze kuorodheshwa hapa chini katika kauli iliyoletewa kwa muhtasari:
⇒ Kuanzisha kituo cha jamii cha wakimbizi;
⇒ Kuongeza ufahamu na kusherehekea kwa tamaduni mseto kupitia kwa elimu pamoja na ushirikishwaji wa kisani na kira;
⇒ Kuanzisha eneo mahusisi na kwa taarifa/wapendekezwa;
⇒ Kutoa wakili/mwakilishi wa upangaji haswa pale ambapo wakimbizi/wahamiaji huenda kupiga saini kandarasi;
⇒ Kusoma maswala ya kielele yanayohusiana na wilaya ya shule, Chuo cha Black Hawk pamoja na Shule/Kitu Kipya chenyewe uwezo;
⇒ Kuunda Mdashalo wa utangamano mzuri katika polisi/mamlaka na wahamiaji/wakimbizi; na
⇒ Kutoa huduma za mahali pamoja kwa manufaa ya taarifa na msaada pamoja na kujenga jamii, pengine kupitia katika uundaji wa idara ya Jiji au kamati.

Makundi Matano ya Hatua yataweza kutfanya kazi kwenyewe miezi sita ijayo ili kuweza kufikia mazingatio haya, huku kifwata na kutoa ripoti kwa washiriki wa duara hili ya masomo ambako kutafanyika Disemba 1, 2011, inatarajia kwamba huu utakuwa tu ndio mwanzo wa mazungumzo yanayoenielea miongoni mwa jirani wa muda-mrefu wa Kisiwa cha Rock na wahamiaji wetu wapya zaaidi na wakazi wakimbizi, ambao wote wanatafuta kuboresha ubora wa maisha katika jamii yetu.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Rock Island in the Midst of Change

Why?

In Rock Island, neighborhoods, schools, churches, businesses and social service agencies are all being affected by the influx of refugees and immigrants to our community. The challenges are great, but the opportunities are just as outstanding.

Consider these recent trends:

⇒ Thirty languages and dialects are spoken in the Rock Island-Milan school system;

⇒ The English Language Learner program in the school district grew from 45 students in 2001 to over 600 in 2011 (roughly 9.5% of total students);

⇒ Because of secondary migration, more than 500 immigrants and refugees have moved to Rock Island in the past five years;

⇒ The Hispanic/Latino population in Rock Island has grown three-fold in the past 20 years. In the 1990 Census, Rock Island’s population was 3.8% Hispanic, and that number grew to 3,664 people (or 9.4%) of the city’s total population by the 2010 Census.

⇒ Refugees with shared ethnic backgrounds have formed solid communities at neighborhood churches and apartment complexes;

⇒ Rock Island’s declining population is being offset by refugees and immigrants;

⇒ Our community is enriched by people with different customs and viewpoints;

⇒ Social service agencies and other service providers are stretched by increasing need and disappearing budgets; and

⇒ As refugees and immigrants become economically stable, they will be moving into neighborhood apartments and homes.
Organizing Dialogue to Move Forward

From April 7 through May 19, 2011 Neighborhood Partners of Rock Island conducted a series of public dialogue groups revolving around the challenges of incorporating recent refugees and immigrants into the community, then developed action steps to create an environment that helps transition this influx of new people into an asset for all of Rock Island.

This approach to community change brought together small, diverse groups of people in an Everyday Democracy-inspired (www.everyday-democracy.org) study circle process, called Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island. The Changing Faces Pilot Group customized study circle questions, tested the process among its own members, and then organized the recruitment of participants. Utilizing sample facilitation guides provided by Everyday Democracy, the Pilot Group spent more than 18 hours reworking discussion questions and scenarios to create a public dialogue process best suited to benefit the Rock Island community.

Participants were recruited among neighborhoods, through agencies, churches, and businesses, within the school district, and through ethnic groups in Rock Island. The Pilot Group members were each tasked with registering five people for the study circles. Newspaper coverage for the process was generous, with many learning of the study circles through the Quad City Times and Rock Island Argus. Neighborhood News and eNews, publications of Neighborhood Partners, covered the registration process, newsletters for the Community Caring Conference and several neighborhood associations. However, it is believed that person-to-person contact was most significant in recruiting participants, particularly among the refugee and immigrant population.

Kick-Off Meeting

Over 120 people filled the Rock Island Academy cafeteria at the Changing Faces: Refugees and Immigrants in Rock Island Kick-Off on April 7, 2011. The keynote speaker was Dr. Edwin Silverman, longtime chief of the Illinois Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services. Dr. Silverman spoke on "The Benefits of Immigration and Immigrant Integration Initiatives." To begin, Dr. Silverman deemed Changing Faces "democracy in action" and commended Rock Island on its efforts.

Dr. Silverman presented several beneficial factors...
of immigration to the U.S. A large percentage of immigrants in this country are highly educated; 28% have college degrees. That percentage rises to 43% concerning African immigrants. In addition to being well-educated, many immigrants have an entrepreneurial spirit.

According to Dr. Silverman, in 2002, there were 70,000 Hispanic-owned businesses in Illinois, and 1.6 million in the U.S. Also, were it not for foreign-born residents, Illinois' population would be dramatically decreased; 15% of the state's population is foreign born. Further, 18% of the Illinois workforce is foreign born.

According to Dr. Silverman, there are over 80 classifications of immigrants in the U.S. Just one of these classifications is given to refugees, who have fled their homeland due to political, racial, or religious persecution. The U.S. settles the largest number of refugees each year. Refugees are settled through the U.S. Refugee Program, the only federal program to aid immigrants. The U.S. Refugee Program serves as a bridge to other agencies such as World Relief, and ultimately to mainstream American culture. Dr. Silverman said that Changing Faces will likewise serve as a bridge between Rock Island's immigrants and refugees and the rest of the community.

Next, Dr. Peter Chege of the University of Illinois Extension took the stage. Dr. Chege came to the U.S. as an immigrant from Kenya. He provided the Kick-Off audience with a snapshot of the situation of recent immigrants and refugees living in Rock Island. These newcomers come from 62 countries and speak 25 languages. Dr. Chege gave several reasons why there has been such an influx of immigrants and refugees into Rock Island in the past five to ten years. Many come to the Quad Cities through the Moline World Relief office. Rock Island's affordable housing options are attractive to these newcomers. The ethnic networks that have since formed draw secondary immigrants of similar backgrounds to Rock Island.

Dr. Chege noted that immigrants and refugees face many challenges which they must overcome in order to become truly integrated. The language difference is a significant barrier. In addition, poor understanding of the American legal system can spell trouble for immigrants and refugees. Inadequate transportation also impedes their ability to advance.

Despite these challenges, recent immigrants and refugees have impacted Rock Island in several positive ways. Dr. Chege cited that they have enriched our city's cultural diversity and strengthen the region's workforce. They have invested in businesses and real estate in Rock Island, and will continue to do so. Also, several refugee groups have converted vacant city lots into gardens. Rock Island's immigrant and refugee population has also shown dedication to community involvement through organizing various ethnic social groups and churches.
Study Circles Overview

During Rock Island’s study circles, participants talked first about how personal experiences have shaped their lives and how often they interact with people from other cultures, then, they talked about civic connections to America and Rock Island. Next, each study circle discussed how Rock Island is changing, whether that change is good for all people, and the best approaches to manage that change. Finally, the groups narrowed their main themes to two to four action steps for individuals, small groups and institutions. This discussion was accomplished during five consecutive weekly meetings, each lasting approximately two hours.

Eight study circles met in five locations on three different weekdays for a total of 40 meetings with 129 participants. The largest circle included 19 participants and the smallest had 12. Only 10 out of the 139 people originally registered either dropped out or did not attend a single session. Roughly 33% of the participants were believed to be refugees or immigrants, but due to privacy concerns, the actual number was not tracked. The youngest participants were high school freshmen. Fifty-five people (42%) had perfect attendance during the circles. Forty-four people (34%) missed only one meeting. This means that 99 (77%) of the study circle participants attended at least four out of the five meetings, which is a strong endorsement of the value the participants held regarding the meetings, their content, and how well they functioned.

Each circle was led by two volunteer facilitators who attended intensive, all-day training conducted by Gloria Mengual and John Landesman of Everyday Democracy. These neutral facilitators learned techniques to draw out comments, but keep discussion focused.

Forty meetings were summarized by eight Augustana College students enrolled in Dr. Peter Kivisto’s Sociology 380 course, “Immigration: Beyond a Border” as an initiative of the college’s Community Engagement Center. The study circle participants reviewed these summaries between meetings to bring absent members up to date and refresh themselves on the discussion. The meeting summaries for each of the circles are included in this report in Appendix 1.

Interpreters in Spanish, Swahili and Kirundi were required for three study circles. It should be noted that participants listed 12 different languages in their registration materials, but many could also speak English.

The Community Caring Conference provided childcare for two circles, and refreshments were provided by the Doris & Victor Day Foundation.

Study Circle Sessions

Each study circle set its own ground rules, which helped the group share responsibility for the quality of the discussion.

The study circle sessions started with personal stories, then looked at issues from various points of view. Next, the circles explored possible solutions and then outlined plans for action and change. Each subsequent study circle meeting was a progression, building on discussion from the previous week.

The first session, “Getting to Know Each Other,” focused on meeting the circle participants, relating personal experiences and seeing how different people respond to a new mix of neighbors. Many people shared immigration stories of their own families, whether very recent or a few generations past.
Session Two, “Visions of America: What Ties Us Together,” initiated discussion about ties to America, civic life and how individuals engage in the community. An important point in this session was to talk about what brings people together in Rock Island and what separates us in our community. Talking about prosperity and well-being also linked the experiences of newcomers and long-tenured citizens.

The third session, “How is Our Community Changing,” took a close look at how Rock Island is changing now, how people perceive that change and how we can use what we know about these changes to build a better community. Benefits and concerns about the influx of refugees and immigrants were listed by the circle participants.

Circle participants discussed how Rock Island is absorbing change and ranked community impressions related to criminal justice, education, employment, health care, housing, leadership, media, public services, shopping and social services in Session 4. “What Should We Do About Immigration and Community Change in Rock Island?” then focused on approaches to improving the lower-ranking community impressions and building on the successes of higher-ranking community impressions.

Session 5, “Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?” asked the participants to take the ideas generated during the previous week’s session and mold them into actions by groups or individuals. Ultimately, the groups were asked to identify their top two or three ideas for action and identify which organizations were best suited to help. Each group was tasked with sharing these top ideas at the Action Forum, which brought together all the groups and other interested members of the community.
Evaluating the Study Circles

At the last study circle session, participants were asked to complete a Participant Questionnaire about their experience with the process. The questionnaire was completed by 58 (45%) of the participants. Several study circles offered assistance to those with limited English to complete the surveys.

Some demographics were tracked from the surveys. From this information, we can glean that the study circle participants were mainly people in their late 40s to early 50s. There were more female participants, and most were from small families, with fewer than four people. Many who completed the survey did not care to share their annual family income range, but for those who did, most earned between $50,000 and $99,000, which tracks closely to the education level. The study circle participants who answered the survey were an educated group, with 62% having a college or advanced level degree. Here is a breakdown of those survey results:

**Age:** Avg = 49; Median = 54  
**Female:** 34 (58.6%)  
**Male:** 23 (39.7%)  
**Did Not Answer Gender:** 1 (1.7%)  
**Household Size:** Avg =3.18; Median = 2  
**Children Under 18:** Total = 62; Avg =1.11; Median = 0; Most = 8

**Income:**  
- Under $14,999: 4 (7%)  
- $15,000 to $24,999: 5 (8.6%)  
- $25,000 to $49,999: 10 (17.2%)  
- $50,000 to $99,999: 21 (36.2%)  
- $100,000 and Over: 2 (3.4%)  
- Did not answer: 16 (27.6%)

**Education:**  
- Elementary: 2 (3.4%)  
- Some High School: 2 (3.4%)  
- High School Graduate: 4 (7%)  
- Some College: 10 (17.2%)  
- College Graduation: 18 (31%)  
- Graduate (Advanced Degree): 18 (31%)  
- Did Not Answer: 4 (7%)  

The questionnaire asked participants to self-identify their ethnic background. These were the various answers:

- African (4)  
- African-American (3)  
- American (4)  
- Asian (3)  
- Belgian  
- Black (4)  
- Black American  
- Caucasian (12)  
- Caucasian American w/ German ancestry  
- Chinese  
- Christianity  
- Congolese (Banyamurenge)  
- Dutch  
- European  
- European mutt  
- German (3)  
- Germanic Peoples of Europe  
- Greek  
- Human Race  
- Hungarian  
- Karen  
- Liberian  
- Mexican  
- Multi-Racial  
- Native American (2)  
- Nepali (2)  
- Swiss  
- Tigrigna  
- WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant)  
- White (5)  
- White American  
- White/Hispanic

Survey responders had spent a range of two months to 73 years in the United States. The average respondent had been in the U.S. 39.6 years and the median was 51 years. The average respondent had lived in Rock Island 15.8 years and the median had lived in Rock Island 8.5 years. The amount of time people had lived in Rock Island ranged from two months to 54 years. Seven respondents did not live in Rock Island.
Thirty-seven (64%) of the participants who competed a Participant Questionnaire left written comments about the study circle process. Amazingly, zero (0) comments were negative, but there were two suggestions for better time management and one for capping the size of the groups to 10 or 11. Here is a sampling:

- I learned a lot.
- Enjoyable experience. Looking forward to solutions.
- I have worked in Rock Island for 11 years. Neighborhood Partners is to be commended for initiating this action program.
- I really enjoyed meeting every week with the group and would love to do some volunteer work/training.
- It was good. What happens next?
- It was great getting to know the others in the group. We had very good discussions. Our facilitators were great. I’m looking forward to the outcomes/actions steps.
- It was a great experience to hear different points of view from different people. Learned a lot about cultural differences and opinions on refugees and immigrants. I enjoyed it much.
- I really would like to thank the organizer because I learned so many things which will be very useful in our life and hope reach the destination of success. I want to continue to attend this program to broaden my knowledge to help my society.
- I have been learning many things since I came to this city. Right now, I know a lot about many different cultures. And also I can help my people with teaching them about why Americans are so hardworking, punctual, and I would like to thank all Americans and the government of the U.S.A. that help my people and bring many of my people in this country since 2008.
- Excellent program with noble goals. Great organization of the program. Enriching conversations.
- Eye opening. Very good program.
- I liked where everyone communicated with each other. Everyone helped each other.
- I found the study circle to be very eye-opening. I never knew the difference between a refugee and an immigrant until I came to this group. It was also very well constructed and delivered. Having a separate person taking down our in-puts freed me up to be creative and to listen more intently, instead of trying to take notes. I think groups similar to these would be very effective in informing the community of the similarities within each of us. It would be good for those who work within the refugee community to see others in the same geographical area who are totally unaware of these sub-groups.
- I was energized by the Circle experience. The participants were open and welcoming to all. We had three refugees in our group which kept us focused on the discussion at hand. The time became short during some discussions, but again this was a good incentive to stay on task. The process with the printed material was a good one - moving from people's personal experiences to action for the refugees. I am certainly committed to volunteering my time and talents in ways as yet unknown, but hopefully to become more real after the Action forum. I am honored to have participated and applaud Rock Island for undertaking this project.
- Very valuable and worthwhile way to contribute to a common cause. It was easy to get to know the other participants and to feel comfortable communicating with them. Time management could be made more efficient.
- It was helpful to learn from others about what they do and do not know about local resources and how they interact with each other. Most significant experience related to the valuable input from the members who shared personal information about their journey to America and eventually Rock Island. Concurrent with their recommendations for improving communication and resource supports to facilitate immigrants and refugees extended transition to citizenship. Each participant presented with genuine interest in being part of finding solutions to the problems experienced by immigrants and refugees living in our community.
- This has been invaluable; a great mix of different ethnic groups represented and most have been very open to share their thoughts/feelings/opinions. Can this be repeated to open the experience to more people?
- The facilitator was great! I enjoyed hearing different perspectives. I was surprised at some ideas! Informational! On a scale from 1 to 10, this was a 10.
- This should be done again.
- This was a good way to start.
- I commend Neighborhood Partners. I hope we will find ways to maintain our connections to the refugee community.

Worthwhile Exercise

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Pilot Group Critique of Study Circles

There was a short brainstorming session during the Action Oversight Group meeting on June 23, in which those present identified the likes, dislikes and things that should be changed about the study circles. These thoughts will be given consideration for implementation should a future phase of Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island study circles be conducted.

Likes

⇒ Pilot Group organization and the fact that the group reviewed items as they went along
⇒ Interpreters were helpful
⇒ That Rock Island did this process
⇒ Easy to speak out in circles
⇒ Some session content was very good and the ability to adjust was very good
⇒ Created cultural awareness
⇒ Whole process was given a lot of publicity
⇒ Process was good and productive
⇒ Provided all an opportunity to hear stories (first time experience for many)
⇒ Provided good introduction to the whole process of study circles
⇒ Always a welcoming environment
⇒ Having dedicated note takers (college students) was important

Change for Future

⇒ 10 people per circle as ideal size
⇒ Be concerned about safety when selecting venues
⇒ Do better job recruiting certain ethnic groups
⇒ Focus more on recruiting Latino immigrants
⇒ Reach out better to non-traditional media and outlets
⇒ Be aware of literacy levels
⇒ Be strategic in order to reach non-readers (through churches, etc.)

Dislikes

⇒ Some groups too large
⇒ Groups were not well balanced
⇒ Not enough diversity of ethnic groups
**Top Ideas**

### Action Forum

The Action Forum for Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island was held on May 19, 2011. During the forum, each study circle presented two to four action steps to help the community face the problems or chances for progress when immigrants and refugees arrive in Rock Island. Similar ideas between the study circles were combined, and then the approximately 120 people in attendance were requested to vote on their three favorite action ideas. Even people who did not participate in the study circles were able to vote on priorities. After the voting, the top seven ideas were visually identified and those present were invited to sign up for Action Teams to help implement the specific Action Idea.

### Action Steps by Priority Vote

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Combined Action Steps (similar ideas from different Circles combined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Establish a community center for refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Housed in MLK Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Monitored by trained refugees and volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Continuation of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Support groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Practical education (living skills, work skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ City liaison for refugees (police)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Goal: To increase awareness and celebration of diverse cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Cultural education and celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Event showcasing cultures – in an existing event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Cultural diversity training for police, city workers, teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Sharing circles of new immigrants/refugees with longtime residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Artistic Civic Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Build awareness among and strengthen relationships with larger community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Visual arts (public art, murals, etc); performing arts (song, dance, music, puppets, storytelling, etc); literary arts; cultural events (fashion shows, parades, festivals, etc); children’s games; crafts; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Cultural Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Government officials (police, fire, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ At Schwiebert Park, Douglas Park or other park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Central clearing house of information / referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Identify needs, services, and service providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Match volunteers and agencies (Rock Island school system, Retired &amp; Senior Volunteer Program [RSVP], United Way, Churches United)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Web-based access for information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Provide an advocate/representative when refugee/immigrants go to sign leases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ To help them avoid any hidden fees, fines or misunderstandings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Organize meetings between refugees/immigrants and agencies, school district, Blackhawk College, and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ To discuss concerns about education and explore feasibility of a Newcomer School/Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Action Steps by Priority Vote continued....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Combined Action Steps (similar ideas from different Circles combined)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6        | 23    | Forum for Positive Interaction Between Police/Authorities & Immigrants/Refugees  
  - On-going communication during non-crisis situations.  
  - Build trust, mutual understanding and cooperation.  
  - "Ride Along" program; community policing; etc.  
  - Police liaison  
  - Organize town hall sessions for dialogue between refugee / immigrant communities and the police department and Dept. of Children & Family Services (DCFS)  
  - To help the police and DCFS develop fair and culturally-sensitive approaches toward refugees/immigrants |
| 7        | 13    | Goal: To provide one-stop services for information and support and to build community  
  - Develop a center for refugees/immigrants  
  - Sharing of cultures across heritages  
  - Learn "street smarts"  
  - Knowledge of services in community  
  Create department or agency  
  - Mayor-appointed committee for housing, jobs, English as Second Language (ESL), Dept. of Human Services, translator, lawyer, hospital, police, school districts, colleges, media, financial, manufacturing, World Relief, refugees, Rock Island Housing Authority  
  - Mission and vision statement  
  - Utilize best practices, national data and studies |
| 10       |       | Rock Island Refugee Health Initiative  
  - To improve mental health counseling  
  - Dental, nutrition, other wellness |
| 10       |       | English as Second Language (ESL)  
  - Incentives for companies to provide ESL  
  - Community volunteers in colleges, high schools, elementary schools, elderly to help with ESL  
  - SAFARI: Student Advocates for Awareness of Refugees & Immigrant Issues at Augustana College |
| 5        |       | Start Ethnic-Cultural Board  
  - Representatives from each ethnic group and Neighborhood Partners members  
  - Meeting monthly/quarterly |
| 5        |       | Create a student mentoring program  
  - Student tutoring partners with American student program  
  - Student credits for helping  
  - Neighborhood Partners assistance |
| 5        |       | Continue Changing Faces group to centralize activity  
  - Use current Chambers for contacts in each area – volunteers, churches, government agencies, education  
  - Mayor / other notables to invite immigrants  
  - City or grant assistance |
| 2        |       | Research communities with refugees and funding possibilities (Neighborhood Partners) |
Action Steps by Study Circle continued ..... 

**Tuesdays @ Community Caring Conf.**

1. Education
   - Organize meetings between refugees/immigrants and agencies, school district, Blackhawk College, and other stakeholders
     - To discuss concerns about education and explore feasibility of a Newcomer School/Center
2. Criminal Justice / Police
   - Organize town hall sessions for dialogue between refugee/immigrant communities and the police department and Dept. of Children & Family Services (DCFS)
     - To help the police and DCFS develop fair and culturally-sensitive approaches toward refugees/immigrants
3. Employment
   - Organize job fairs targeted at immigrant/refugee communities and offer employers workshops to sensitize them about immigrant/refugee cultures and ease their integration in the workplace
4. Housing
   - Provide an advocate/representative when refugee/immigrants go to sign leases
     - To help them avoid any hidden fees, fines or misunderstandings

**Sundays @ Community Caring Conf.**

1. Goal: To provide one-stop services for information and support and to build community
   - Develop a center for refugees/immigrants
     - Sharing of cultures across heritages
     - Learn “street smarts”
     - Knowledge of services in community
2. Goal: To increase awareness and celebration of diverse cultures
   - Cultural education and celebration
     - Event showcasing cultures – in an existing event
     - Cultural diversity training for police, city workers, teachers
     - Sharing circles of new immigrants/refugees with longtime residents

**Fridays @ Broadway Church**

1. Continue Changing Faces group to centralize activity
   - Use current Chambers for contacts in each area – volunteers, churches, government agencies, education
   - Mayor / other notables to invite immigrants
   - City or grant assistance
2. Rock Island Refugee Health Initiative
   - To improve mental health counseling
   - Dental, nutrition, other wellness

**Tuesdays @ Broadway Church**

1. Central clearing house of information / referrals
   - Identify needs, services, and service providers
   - Match volunteers and agencies (Rock Island school system, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program [RSVP], United Way, Churches United)
   - Web-based access for information
2. Mentoring through Neighborhood Partners
3. Research communities with refugees and funding possibilities (Neighborhood Partners)

**Sundays @ Broadway Church**

1. Create department or agency
   - Mayor-appointed committee for housing, jobs, English as Second Language (ESL), Dept. of Human Services, translator, lawyer, hospital, police, school district, colleges, media, financial, manufacturing, World Relief, refugees, Rock Island Housing Authority
   - Mission and vision statement
   - Utilize best practices, national data and studies
2. English as Second Language (ESL)
   - Incentives for companies to provide ESL
   - Community volunteers in colleges, high schools, elementary schools, elderly to help with ESL
     - SAFARI: Student Advocates for Awareness of Refugees & Immigrant Issues at Augustana College
3. Utilize private organizations and churches to create programming and address the needs brought forth
   - Programming provides cultural exchanges
   - Underwrite cultural booth at Farmer's Market
Action Steps by Priority Vote continued....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
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<th>Combined Action Steps (similar ideas from different Circles combined)</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Better Two-Way Communication Between Institutions / Agencies &amp; Immigrants/Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Produce and disseminate information that is relevant, culturally appropriate and tailored to the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- Improve language capabilities of local institutions/agencies as well as immigrants/refugees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Strengthen understanding of immigrant/refugee cultural traditions by location institutions/agencies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employment</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Underwrite cultural booth at Farmer’s Market</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action Steps by Study Circle

**Fridays @ Rock Island Township**

1. Better Two-Way Communication Between Institutions / Agencies & Immigrants/Refugees  
   - Produce and disseminate information that is relevant, culturally appropriate and tailored to the audience  
   - Improve language capabilities of local institutions/agencies as well as immigrants/refugees.  
   - Strengthen understanding of immigrant/refugee cultural traditions by location institutions/agencies.  

2. Artistic Civic Engagement  
   - Build awareness among and strengthen relationships with larger community.  
   - Visual arts (public art, murals, etc); performing arts (song, dance, music, puppets, storytelling, etc); literary arts; cultural events (fashion shows, parades, festivals, etc); children’s games; crafts; etc.  

3. Forum for Positive Interaction Between Police/Authorities & Immigrants/Refugees  
   - Ongoing communication during non-crisis situations.  
   - Build trust, mutual understanding and cooperation.  
   - “Ride Along” program; community policing; etc.  

**Tuesdays @ First Baptist Church**

1. Establish a community center for refugees  
   - Housed in MLK Center  
   - Monitored by trained refugees and volunteers  
   - Continuation of services  
     - Support groups  
     - Practical education (living skills, work skills)  
   - City liaison for refugees

**Sundays @ St. John’s Lutheran Church**

1. Institute a police liaison for immigrant/refugee families  
2. Cultural Festival  
   - Government officials (police, fire, etc.)  
   - At Schwiebert Park, Douglas Park or other park  
3. Start Ethnic-Cultural Board  
   - Representatives from each ethnic group and Neighborhood Partners members  
   - Meeting monthly/quarterly  
4. Create a student mentoring program  
   - Student tutoring partners with American student program  
   - Student credits for helping

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Action Teams Created

The Changing Faces Pilot Group reconvened on June 23, 2011 and began the task of parsing out the action ideas to existing agencies and organizations or creating a new group to help implement the top seven priorities.

Also during that meeting, the original Pilot Group, which organized, tested and recruited the Changing Faces: Refugees and Immigrants in Rock Island study circles, morphed into the Action Oversight Group. At that meeting, the 24 people present took the identified Action Steps, which had been prioritized at the Action Forum on May 19, and created five Action Teams to implement the most important ideas generated from the study circles.

Key among their actions was to merge priorities for three similar action steps: Priority 1, Establish a community center for refugees; Priority 3, Create a central clearinghouse of information and referrals; and Priority 7, Provide one-stop services for information and support and to build community through a center for refugees and immigrants. During the Action Forum, it had been suggested that these priorities be merged, but some people felt it was important to separate refugees and immigrants and their services. Due to time limitations at the Action Forum, the distinctions between the three similar priorities were not fleshed out, plus it was believed to be a job for the Action Oversight Group. During their deliberations, the Action Oversight Group felt it was important not to further compartmentalize newcomers and that it would be limiting to services to distinguish between refugees and immigrants when needs were very similar. It was recognized, however, that the refugee population might need the most extreme help.

Action Team conveners were identified by the Action Oversight Group and meetings for most of the five Action Teams began in August 2011. Below are details on the five action teams:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Topic</th>
<th>Convener(s)</th>
<th># of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugee &amp; Immigrant Center &amp; Information Clearinghouse</td>
<td>Ed Hanna, Neighborhood Partners</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Celebration</td>
<td>Catherine Rodgers-Ingles, Rock Island Arts &amp; Entertainment District</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Molli Nickerson, Project NOW</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education / ESL</td>
<td>Kay Ingham, RI-Milan Schools, Glenda Nicke, Black Hawk College</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Interaction with Police</td>
<td>Jeff VenHuizen, RI Police Dept., Amela Carrol, Community Caring Conference</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Action Teams were tasked with convening stakeholders and interested parties and building on the goals and sub-points identified in the priority statements. Materials provided by Everyday Democracy, which included the Action Team Job Description, Helping Action Groups Succeed, and Action Plan Template, helped organize the direction of the teams.

An important “Report Back” meeting was scheduled between the five Action Team conveners and the Action Oversight Group on October 27, 2011. On Thursday, December 1, 2011 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, conveners of the Action Teams will be asked to report back about progress to the 129 participants of the study circles during a dinner provided by the Doris & Victor Day Foundation.
Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Friday, April 15, 2011

Location: Rock Island Township Hall, 2627 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Diana Alm
(X) Rebecca Arnold
(X) Hannah Busching
(X) Kent Cornish
(X) Peter Chege
(X) Christy Filby
(X) Moses Gaylor

(X) Ann Grove
( ) Nar Gurung
(X) Lindsey Hornbaker
(X) Gwen Jamison
(X) Virginia Jarrett
( ) Rev. Donald Johnson
(X) Carrie Smith

Introductions
- Majority from rural areas
- Two first generation immigrants
- 4 African Americans, 7 Caucasians
- About 50% speak more than one language

Scenarios for Discussion
Scenario 1: A housekeeper works in a private home and realizes she has not been paid for the past three weeks. She is unsure of her rights.
- Integration into the U.S. is difficult
  - Immigrants lack the knowledge and support they need to integrate successfully
  - Need for a place in Rock Island that assists people with general needs
- Fear of involving authority
  - Getting help from authorities and organizations takes effort and social capital
  - Need for personal relationships/trust relationships
    - Fewer than 1 in 10 immigrants has a personal relationship with an American.
    - Simple conversations help create confidence and bonds.

Scenario 2: An immigrant in the store cannot read a label, and they overhear someone saying, "Learn how to speak English...."
- Misconception of Americans that immigrants get "everything free" and Americans get nothing (bitterness)
- Language barriers
  - If someone is trying to learn English and they hear this comment, it will delay their progress
  - One participant is learning English; others cannot understand him, but he understands them perfectly
    - There is a friendly way to talk about language differences. Ex.: if someone tries to speak in Swahili, don't call out their mistakes, encourage them, and celebrate the fact that they're trying and making an effort.
  - Use shorter sentences and more direct works when talking with English language learners; speak intentionally

Scenario 3: Parents are worried about crowded classrooms; they fear that refugee children are taking up the teacher's time.
- There's an overall concern in education about overcrowding
  - The problem is with funding, not the children
  - Overcrowding is not just because of immigrant/refugee children
- There's little time to prepare teachers for immigrants and overcrowding
  - Immigrant/refugee populations often spring up quickly
  - Racism is prevalent
  - The same issues are still in existence, but the different cultures cannot be covered up
- A key component of America is public education for all children.
- It's not about SAT scores; children need to learn other life skills, and differences are part of life.
  - Is the value in that they have skill or is the value in that they have tolerance and empathy?

Wrap-Up
What did you learn?
- You have to have some time of structure to help people
  - How can we make our community more open to provide services for all people?

Were there any stories that surprised or touched you?
- Difficulty of getting whole families to the U.S.; refugee families are often split up for long periods of time.
  - One member is introduced as "mommy" by some of her students
    - Often, family and extended family are needed to help overcome problems.
    - Discussion of the communal living on 9th Street- sharing life together, helping out with others' rent, etc.
    - Family titles are often an issue to respect
  - Everyone needs to be willing and committed to seeing change in Rock Island with immigrants/refugees
  - Transition/moves from one community to another within the U.S. can be paralleled with immigrants moving here.
Session 2: Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

Describe Your America

1. What are/were your expectations about living in the United States?
   - People volunteer
   - Someone will help
   - Security
   - In other countries, different dialects prevent discussion, but here everyone speaks English
   - Came to study
   - Came right at the time of 9/11, so came to a very different U.S. than what he had prepared for.
   - Not a lot of family here, so holidays are quiet
   - Some places are safe, some are not
   - People are friendly (but so are people in home country)
   - Americans drive on the wrong side of the road.

   From native-born residents:
   - Although different in Illinois, there is still conflict with racism especially seen in family visits to the South
   - Take security for granted, depending on where you live
   - Grew up believing I could have any lifestyle I wanted
   - Live with the American system, but experiences elsewhere teach you what to value
   - Main differences might be between living in rural versus urban areas
   - Times are different, and people are now more open to people of other cultures
   - Perception that all things in America are unsafe and dangerous might be due to portrayals in the media

2. Was there a time when you or your family lived better? Has your prosperity improved over the generations?
   - Things have not improved – family used to be landowners
   - People move forward with more education
   - Overlay prosperity on a timeline, and it will be revealing for things like war or recession
   - Family is better now because there was civil war for 14 years and people feared to stay
   - No desire to go back to previous situation

3. What changed to affect your family's well-being?
   - War / conflict
   - Education
   - Career selection
   - First love
   - Economic stability and situation
   - Divorce

What Connects Us?

1. When and where do you feel part of the Rock Island community?
   - Work: 4
   - Church: 3
   - Voting: 1
   - Volunteering: 1
   - At work, people feel connected to the company or organization they work for, which can be unique to Rock Island. When you work in the community, you feel connected to the energy here.

2. What brings us (particularly refugees) together in Rock Island?
   - Special functions
   - Day to Honor Immigrants brings refugees from different countries together – held in late June
   - Churches bring together many cultures

3. Describe what separates us in our community.
   - Money
   - Power
   - Culture
   - Language
   - Education
   - Hard to hear African-American children tell African refugee children to leave and go back to Africa since that is what African-Americans used to hear a generation ago (or more recently) from white people.
- It is important to leave the past in the past and move forward.

4. Do you feel more attachment to America or to Rock Island?
   - Rock Island – 2
     - Family is here
     - Home is here
     - Refugee: I can tell you more about Rock Island than America
   - America – 3
     - Could live anywhere
   - Midwest – 1

**Engaging in America**

1. What does it mean to live in the United States?
   - Learn more about the U.S. when you live somewhere else for awhile
   - We are lucky to be born here, but do we deserve privilege and wealth any more than anyone else?
   - Great opportunities for school and college
   - More flexibility in education in the U.S.
   - Focus is on the individual and taking care of yourself rather than reliance on community
   - Individuals can make decisions, but in other places decisions might be guided by community norms
   - Color of your skin can separate you
   - Summary: Land of Opportunity, better for all genders, security, flexibility, self-responsibility

2. What does it mean to be an American?
   - Work advantages
   - Vote
   - Individual responsibility
   - Opportunity to improve oneself and the country
   - Refugees are unsure of making permanent decisions about starting businesses or more schooling unless they have decided to become a permanent resident or citizen.

3. Where do you engage in community or civic opportunities?
   - Church
   - Neighborhood Partners
   - Working with refugees
   - Rotary Club
   - Service organizations
   - Outreach organizations

4. What will help transition of immigrants and refugees into Rock Island?
   - Integration is good, but must be careful of not losing connection between generations. Children may adopt American customs and become less aware of cultural ways and traditions.
     - Less respect for elders
     - Music
     - As children become older, they hopefully become more interested in culture and genealogy
     - Person to person outreach really makes a difference
     - Create more opportunities to mix with long-time citizens
     - Important to create a sense of belonging for refugees and immigrants
     - Interact in comfortable settings
     - Refugees are always willing to share their culture
     - Long-time citizens need to have open ears
     - Put people in kitchens side by side to cook and do dishes at social events

**Wrap Up**

1. What did you learn in this session?
   - Americans don’t articulate their identity well; it is unexamined.
   - Need person-to-person contact
   - Making meetings/events available is not enough. There has to be personal outreach.
   - Create informal opportunities to learn and share culture
   - Americans need to be interested
   - Many organizations can create opportunities to share with immigrants and refugees.
   - Need to learn to keep identity while learning a new one.
   - Appoint/hire individuals within organizations to work with refugees and immigrants.

2. Where do people feel comfortable gathering?
   - Churches
   - Housing/community centers
   - YMCA (gathering place, plus exercise and sports)
   - Parks / outdoors
   - Homes

3. Did you learn new ways to participate in the community?
Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Friday, April 29, 2011

Location: Rock Island Township Hall, 2627 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent
(X) Diana Alm (X) Ann Grove
(X) Rebecca Arnold ( ) Nar Gurung
(X) Hannah Busching (X) Lindsey Hornbaker
(X) Kent Comish (X) Gwen Jamison
(X) Peter Chege (X) Virginia Jarrett
(X) Christy Filby ( ) Rev. Donald Johnson
( ) Moses Gaylor (X) Carrie Smith

Session 3- How is Our Community Changing?

Xenophobia—hatred or fear of foreigners or strangers or of their politics or culture. Conversations and discussions were framed with this concept/phobia in mind.

Views for Discussion

View 1: Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.

"Agree or Disagree" opinions about sections of View 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Teaching young people is a hard job.&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It is even harder to teach children who are new to this country.&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Teachers may have an even more difficult time communicating with the parents.&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Schools with high concentrations of immigrants and refugees are the most challenged.&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The schools need a lot more help if we expect them to do their job.&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Teachers are challenged not just by immigrants and refugees in the classroom, but by other developmental problems in their students
- Children who have never been in any controlled group situation are going to have problems adjusting

Language

- Language differences
  - Should English speakers be teaching non-English speakers?
  - Potential for dual-language teaching child-to-child?
  - Children need to interact more with each other...refugee students feel isolated because of ELL programs and special classes; refugee children and other children need to mix.
  - Often it is necessary to pull students out to concentrate on ability-specific skills
    - Many different situations—some need to be pulled out and some need to be included
    - Story about an immigrant student sitting in the back of a classroom, not understanding a word of what was going on, and being ignored by the teacher—this cannot happen
- One participant described her experience sending her children to a dual-language (Spanish-English) school in the Northwest:
  - 50% Hispanic students, 50% Caucasian students
  - Cultural activities were held in the evenings
  - Without the bilingual programs, Hispanic children would not have been bilingual
    - When children are pulled out of the classroom, they end up having low levels of performance in both languages
  - In the classroom, children were typically paired with a partner of a different race
  - Test scores improved because more kids were getting more help (child helping child)
  - Teachers were specially selected, had to work extra hard and be extra creative
    - Possible ideas/solutions:
      - Taking components of the ELL programs and using them in "normal" classrooms
        - Difficult when there are more than 2 languages represented

Teachers

- Desire to see more dual language teachers
  - Students can’t understand teachers who don’t speak their language
  - Immigrants want to see teachers who are immigrants and refugees
- One participant described a school in Muscatine, IA, which was started by the Liberian community
  - Liberian community wanted a school where there would be Liberian teachers, where they could teach Liberian culture, etc.
  - Became a model school, drawing the attention of the governor
  - Many refugees are certified/qualified to be teachers, they’re just not being hired

Socialization

- Immigrant/non-immigrant socialization is an intentional part of after-school programs
  - Students need to walk hand-in-hand academically AND socially
- Anti-Bullying efforts

24
Bullying is a huge problem at Rock Island High School.

Fighting is a part of play in some countries

"Is it always the weak who get picked on or is it different elsewhere?"

- In Kenya, sometimes it's the weak and sometimes it's just random. Discipline is rigorously enforced in the schools in Kenya, so it's not a very big problem.

Summary of View 1
- Need for socialization, bringing the different cultures together
- Teacher capabilities are an issue
- Educational strategies, such as ELL, are not as productive as they could be

View 5: New cultures make our community better.
- Common mindsets:
  - "Why do we have to change for them?"
  - "Are we compromising who we are for them?"
  - "We had to change." (as in our ancestors had to change)
    - It is easy to look at all of the above statements through a narrow lens.

Viewing Change Negatively
- The schools asked the public to respond to which programs should be cut or less funded in light of the budget cuts, and programs for immigrants were targeted by one person in the community: "We should take care of our own children first."
  - They are all our children.
  - At what point is an immigrant considered an American?

Why Are You Choosing to "Swim Upstream" On This Issue?
- Struggles in the black community
  - There has always been racism among the black community
  - Desire to break down barriers
  - Black people are still fighting against themselves
  - One black participant had a teacher say to her, "You speak English so well," when English was her first (and only) language.
    - The same participant carried on to say, "Why would I judge you? I don't dislike you based on where you're from. I'll only dislike you if you're a nasty person."
  - We cannot say that black people are less judgmental than white people.

Busing in Rock Island Schools
- Community members saying "We need busing" when members of our study circle remember walking the same route
  - It is less safe now
  - Once you've been in a position, it makes it easier to accept it

- Busing is not just an issue for black students or white students, but for all students

Welcoming Foreigners
- Ethiopia and Kenya are very welcoming to foreigners
  - Participant told a story about a white woman translating for him in Ethiopia
- People all over the world want to prosper
  - People should make a bigger deal about settling in new countries
    - There are Americans in other countries who are enjoying themselves

- Moral issue at World Relief
  - God has said to welcome the stranger
  - It's not just about travelling, but about getting to know people
  - Breaking down learned stereotypes/racism

Summary of View 5
- Necessary to break down "us" vs. "them"
- The issue is better understood through...
  - Walk of faith
  - Experiences/travel
  - Personal experience

View 3: Social service workers or police are viewed as heavy handed, reporting situations in the refugee communities too quickly.
- What is happening in the immigrant community (problems with police) has been happening in the black community for decades
  - Based on location and poverty
- Immigrant feeling anger towards the RPD
  - Immigrants see the RPD as being unreasonable and heavy handed; authorities are never invited before they show up
  - African families believe that the police don’t give them the opportunity to discipline their children
    - Same issue in black community
    - The idea here is letting the children know that there are expectations
    - If the children know that their parents “can’t get them anymore,” the children get looser and parents get scared
    - Parents don’t want to abuse their children; they just want the chance to talk to their children
  - They feel disrespected, ignored
    - When the police come, they only address the children, not the parents
    - One family experienced having their child put in a juvenile facility...counterproductive because the child got “harder”

- Needs to be a police that is assigned specifically to immigrant/refugee issues

Summary of View 3
- Frustrations about cultures come from cultural differences
  - Poverty confounds cultural issues
- Needs to be ways to bridge the gap of understanding between the immigrants/cultures and the police
Wrap-Up

Issue of Social Change
- Group members are glad it’s finally being looked at, but “why did we just start focusing on it now that immigrants are here?”
  - Black people have nowhere to go to tell their story...Africans can go back to Africa
- Hopeful that we can look at the community and appreciate people for who they are
  - Treatment of Immigrants/Blacks by Authorities
    - Police should come as humans, not just in the name of the law
    - All people should be helped, no double-standards
      - “Yes, this is America, but you’re not necessarily dealing with Americans.”
    - Looking at refugees is bringing issues to light that will be beneficial for all citizens (specifically in the black community) too.
    - We need to deal with black/white racism issues

Expectations
- When people see and hear about America on TV, etc. and then they come here, they feel like they’re being lied to
  - Disillusionment
  - Promised certain things but they have...bills, no jobs, no English, no education, deception

Concluding Thoughts
- There’s a sense of America as a certain “thing”
  - Need to expand thought of what it means to be American
    - Expanding idea of American culture
    - Cultural dynamics

Changin Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Friday, May 6, 2011

Location: Rock Island Township Hall, 2627 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Diana Alm
(X) Rebecca Arnold
( ) Hannah Busching
(X) Kent Cornish
(X) Peter Chege
( ) Christy Filby
(X) Moses Gaylor

(X) Ann Grove
( ) Nar Gurung
(X) Lindsey Hornbaker
(X) Gwen Jamison
(X) Virginia Jarrett
( ) Rev. Donald Johnson
(X) Carrie Smith Others present: Peter Kivisto, substitute note taker

Session 4: What Should We Do About Immigration and Community Change in Rock Island?

Community Impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>In Rock Island, every child receives a quality education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Rock Island’s health care system serves the needs of all our residents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing in Rock Island is affordable, available, clean and safe for all residents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, neighborhoods, etc.) reflect the diversity of our population</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Local media offer fair and full coverage about immigrants and refugees</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>All neighborhoods in Rock Island have access to public services (such as refuse, recycling, road maintenance, transit, police and fire protection, etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has equal access to clothing, food and everyday items.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>The social services system in Rock Island (such as job training, immigrant/refugee services, child welfare, etc.) meets everyone’s needs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The issue of jobs is not simply whether or not there are jobs, but what kinds of jobs they are and how they pay. Do they pay a living wage?
- The NAACP hosts a job fair twice a year. The most recent one was poorly attended. No refugees showed up. Maybe it wasn’t publicized adequately, with advertising not appearing in places that refugees would likely see it.

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Approaches to Change
- Additional approach: Street Smarts

Categories that performed the best: Shopping, Public Services

Shopping:
- People (particularly women) know how to “get the word out.”

Public Services:
- Bus system praised for attempting to get people to shops and to do so during prime shopping hours.
- Individual drivers are generally very good about trying to assist riders—unlike bus systems in larger cities like Chicago.
- Lots of ride-sharing within the refugee community. Especially on Saturday.
  - This is in part why refugees like to live in close proximity to other refugees. Many people don’t own cars and can’t afford them, so those who do are especially valuable members of their respective communities—if they are willing to serve as drivers for others.
- To what extent do newcomers use the bus for shopping?
  - They use the bus more extensively to get to work and less so for shopping, where ride-sharing is common.
- The bottom line is that it is important to be aware of the fact that neighbors within ethnic communities tend to work cooperatively.
- Problem that can arise when groups of black-skinned people are riding in a car together: the “4-deep rule.” If there are 4 blacks in a car, it will be stopped by the police.
- In this part of the country—in smaller cities and rural areas where there are no extensive systems of public transportation—driving a car is normative, and is probably seen by many newcomers as an indication that one is fitting into the receiving society.
- Fire, garbage collection, etc. are areas where it appears that people are treated essentially the same.

Categories that performed the worst: Criminal Justice, Employment

Criminal Justice:
- “Will we ever get it right?”
- Black refugees are often treated as African Americans and thus have to deal with issues of race and racism in a way, for example, that Bosnia refugees did not have to. Racial stereotyping was discussed.
- Issue of police “bullying.” Local police officials think that newcomers fear the police because where they came from the police were brutal and corrupt, but it also has to do with the way the police here treat newcomers.
  - One major area of concern revolves around the issue of disciplining children—what is seen as proper in the homeland culture is seen as abuse in the U.S. This cultural conflict leads to conflict between immigrants and the key players in the criminal justice system.
- The police in Moline and Davenport have worked with immigrant communities to improve relations. Have similar attempts been made in Rock Island? There was concern about the local police working with ICE to identify the undocumented, noting that this creates a climate of suspicion.
- Some people have looked suspiciously on the Study Circles, seeing them as an attempt at surveillance of immigrant and refugee communities. This may be true for some people who dropped out of the Study Circles.
- In terms of dealing with criminal records, the NAACP hosts “expunging seminars” a few times a year.
- The police treat black and white juveniles differently.
- There is a need to identify a “go to” person in the police department.

Employment:
- The Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations need to be players.
- Problem of transferring credentials from another country to the U.S.
  - Problem for many immigrants and refugees in quite a wide range of professional positions.

Healthcare:
- In terms of health services, Community Health Care is doing a very good job.
- Mental health services are skimpy.
- In the area of health services in general, interpreters are often hard to find. It is important that family members not be used as interpreters (especially children). Part of the problem has to do with pay, or the lack thereof, for interpreters.
- Rock Island has a mental health court, but it is unclear whether this has had an impact on immigrants, many of whom don’t seek out mental health services.

Wrap-Up
The main question is, “What can neighbors do to help newcomers?” Beyond this, how should we deal with local people who “don’t have the milk of human kindness coursing through their veins,” who dislike the presence of newcomers? How should overt racism and anti-immigrant/anti-refugee sentiment be addressed?

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Friday, May 13, 2013

Location: Rock Island Township Hall, 2627 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Diana Aim (X) Peter Chege
(X) Rebecca Arnold (X) Christy Filby
(X) Hannah Busching
Session 5: Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?

Crafting Action Steps Together

The action steps below were voted on in the following manner:

- " = the most significant issue that we can do something about
- " = 2nd most significant issue that we can do something about
- " = 3rd most significant issue that we can do something about

1. Acting individually or in small groups, how can we help our community progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?
   - Volunteering with already existing programs
   - Making existing organizations aware of the problem
     o NAACP, MLK Center, Lions Club, Rotary
   - Willingness to speak out and/or illustrate the problem
   - Work with the (non-print) news media (radio, television, websites) to promote awareness of refugee/immigrant issues
   - Help immigrants/refugees be aware of available resources
   - **Opportunities to socialize across cultures
     o Soccer games, potlucks, community gardens, cultural festivals, parade participation, picnics
     - Information available at the games/events
     - Coaches from other schools coming to watch/play
     - School/parent interaction
     - Community building
     - Integration of ethnicities
     - Improving communication between refugees and others
     - Building social capital
   - Practical helping from churches, schools, parents
     o **Liaisons between immigrants and schools
       - Potentially parents who have children in the same class with immigrant children

2. Working with institutions or with agencies, how can we help our community make progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?
   - ""Increased distribution of information to refugee/immigration population
     o Must be in understandable form
   - "Increased understanding/education agencies on the needs/problems of refugees/immigrants.
     o Communication between both the agencies and the refugees/immigrants → increased cultural awareness
     o Agencies being proactive rather than reactive
     o Mind frame change from "we need to deal with this" to "this is part of our mission"

3. Name the most important ways to increase civic engagement by immigrants/refugees.
   - Helping grassroots and organizing refugee communities become involved with already existing organizations
     o Dedicated groups (such as groups of only Liberians, etc.) are useful, but not an end in themselves
   - Exploration...
6. Name some strategies that can reduce the disruption of services due to the influx of immigrants/refugees?
   - Increase funding and resources for agencies/faith-based organizations
     o Collaborating efforts
     o Pooling resources
   - 'Increase native speakers’ employment/volunteering in all sectors
     o Government, healthcare, schools, social service agencies
   - Increase efficiency of agencies/sectors through collaboration

7. What are some steps other communities/agencies have taken n regards to immigrants/refugees that can be adopted in Rock Island?
   - Community festivals
     o Viva Quad Cities, Greek festival
   - Hometown associations
     o Casa Guanajuato
   - In-home services
     o Healthcare
   - Healthcare education
     o Diet adjustments upon arriving
       • Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
     o Teaching immigrants how to make familiar dishes with what is available
   - 'Developing leaders within cultural circles
   - Writer having a column in the local paper
   - Capitalizing on shared experiences and common ground (i.e. having children, being parents)
   - Due to the resources in Rock Island, it has become a desirable place to live

Additional discussion:
   - Need to work to change African American/African dynamics
     o Resentment and hostility between newcomers and those who have been here
       • African Americans, Hispanics, and others often feel as if they have been through so many hard times and no one paid
         attention, yet when new refugees and immigrants arrive, they receive all the attention and help that was denied from the
         African American/Hispanic community
     o Creating opportunities for activities and dialogue between African American and Africans
     o See View #6 in Session #3 (pg. 13)

Discussion points ➔ “action(s)” to be presented
   - Better 2-way linguistic and cultural communication between institutions/agencies and immigrants/refugees
   - Artistic civic engagement
   - Ongoing forum between police/authorities and immigrants/refugees
Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Location: First Baptist Church, 3020 30th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance:

(X) Present    ( ) Absent
(X) Ellen Adams
(X) Steve Andich
(X) Ann Bragg
(X) Laura Dunn-Wriedt
(X) Linda Golden
( ) Anthony Heddeisten
(X) Anel Hernandez
(X) Amy Hunter
(X) Kakoz Muzaliwa
(X) Kendra Pokorny

(X) Norma Reiplinger
(X) Eria Roberts
(X) Terry Stimpson
( ) Joseph Thawn
(X) Vincent Thomas
(X) Kim Trapp
(X) Morten Wabayaombe
(X) Johnnie Woods
(X) Kay York

Introductions: The group introduced themselves by answering questions from part one.

Scenarios for Discussion

Scenario 3: Some parents worry about the schooling their children are getting. The classes are crowded. Many of the other students are new immigrants/refugees and demand a lot of the teacher's time.

- helps kids enjoy other cultures
- it is fair for teachers to spend more time with new immigrants/refugees
- engage other students to teach what they know
- it is sometimes easier for people to not get involved because fears of communication
- place students from the same countries together so they can help and learn from one another

Also a discussion of parents knowing English:
Some said it is a disadvantage to children when their parents do not know English. Others said that parents must continue their home language because it is at risk of being lost.

Scenario 1: After members of an immigrant/refugee family start working at Tyson's, their subsidized housing rent is hiked to $800 per month while an American family pays only $50 for the same apartment.

- Subsidized housing rent is based on income
- Cannot qualify for subsidized housing with a criminal record
- Emergency situations, those with disabilities, and recent refugees are put on the top of the list for subsidized housing

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Tuesday, April 19, 2011

Location: First Baptist Church, 3020 30th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance:

(X) Present    ( ) Absent
(X) Ellen Adams
(X) Steve Andich
(X) Ann Bragg
(X) Laura Dunn-Wriedt
(X) Linda Golden
( ) Anthony Heddeisten
(X) Anel Hernandez
(X) Amy Hunter
(X) Kakoz Muzaliwa
(X) Kendra Pokorny

(X) Norma Reiplinger
(X) Eria Roberts
(X) Terry Stimpson
(X) Joseph Thawn
(X) Vincent Thomas
(X) Kim Trapp
(X) Morten Wabayaombe
(X) Johnnie Woods
(X) Kay York

Session 2-Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

Describe Your America

1. What are/were your expectations about living in the United States?
   - More opportunity, less discrimination.
   - Idea that ethnic integration makes us richer
   - People have big expectations; but once they are here they see things differently.
   - Everything is free, don’t have to worry, people are friendly. However, when people don’t speak English, their credentials are questioned.
2. Describe your American experience.
   - History of Irish: discrimination; self-sufficiency. Idea that strong enough can persevere.
   - Women's movement is regressing.
     - Hard separating women's rights from race relations.
   - It is frustrating there is not more tolerance.
   - Race relations are regressing; African Americans haven't been allowed opportunities.
     - People have forgotten what we have in common
     - Race is a big issue and the impact of race should not be minimized.
   - Discrimination based on skin color is a shock for new immigrants.
   - People are so worried with political correctness, they miss the point.
   - Main problems for refugees and immigrants are accents in employment.
     - Discrimination exists in color and age, especially in employment.
     - Preconceived ideas about people who do not speak English well or have an accent.
   - Some students have never been exposed to people of other cultures. Never studied it or read it in history books.
   - We are dealing with some of the same stuff we did 30/40 years ago.
   - Children should be raised to contribute to society- learn to be self-sufficient and independent.

What Connects Us?
2. What brings us together in Rock Island? Is there anything you feel you can unite around?
   - Public high school- look for diversity
   - Rock Island is diverse-there is a variety of language, cultures, music
   - Friendliness; smaller town
   - Caring, helpful community
   - Accessibility of services; open discussion
   - People want solutions and are trying to solve problems.
   - Faith communities working together

3. Describe what separates us in our community.
   - Language
   - Division of incomes
   - Loss of industry in Rock Island
   - Generation gap and communication

Engaging in America
4. What will help the transition of immigrants and refugees into Rock Island?
   - Better education to adult refugees
     - Need to learn English phrases/language
     - People need to learn how to teach people from different cultures; the teaching is completely different
     - Focus on what people need to know
     - "On the job" training- going shopping, etc.
   - Stay in public housing too long
     - Some Immigrants and refugees do not want to be reliant
   - Transition goes both ways
   - Building of relationships is important
   - Refugees do not have a choice of where they are going

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Tuesday, April 26, 2016

Location: First Baptist Church, 3020 30th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Ellen Adams
(X) Steve Andrich
(X) Ann Bragg
(X) Laura Dunn-Wriedt
(X) Linda Golden
( ) Anthony Heddeisten
( ) Anel Hernandez
(X) Amy Hunter
(X) Kokozi Muzaliwa

(X) Kendra Pokorny
(X) Norma Reiplinger
( ) Terry Stimpson
(X) Joseph Thawn
(X) Vincent Thomas
(X) Kim Trapp
(X) Morten Wabayaombe
( ) Johnnie Woods
(X) Kay York

Session 3: How is Our Community Changing?

Views for Discussion

View 1: Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.
- Problems communicating with parents; work nights
- Makes better teachers
- Might not have experience; need training
- Easier in elementary
- Opportunities for interaction at all levels
- Students interested in learning other languages
- Students may be ahead in classes
- Community center/places where older children can help younger children?
- Difference between immigrants and refugees

View 2: We have stopped trying to keep our common culture.
- Culture is not static; it is constantly changing
- We are all Americans
- Government programs- what it takes to become a citizen
- Take offence to statement- it wasn’t new people coming here; it was more of a political matter
- To blame people who come here is ridiculous
- People underestimate what is going on; the government makes sure you know everything before you are able to become a citizen
- How many Americans can answer the citizenship questions?
- Try to teach new people the culture of America; try to Americanize people.
- Asking people to change all their ways and then they will be American, but it isn’t that easy- it takes a long time before people accept people as Americans.

View 3: Social service workers or police are viewed as heavy handed, reporting situations in refugee communities too quickly.
- Some misunderstandings; but overall fair.
- Some people do not understand the laws here
- Police give refugees a chance to overcome what they have to do.
- Police in Rock Island are fair.

View 4: It creates problems when people don’t speak English.
- People are trying their best to adapt to the situation here.
- People are trying to learn the language here.
- Failure in educational and vocational training.
- Some businesses do a good job teaching people English- when businesses are successful, they can make adjustments.
- Americans are asking more of refugees then we would of ourselves
- Jobs should be based more on qualifications-fair treatment
- Idea that not knowing English can help people find jobs more than knowing English

View 5: New cultures make our community better.
- Most people in the circles want to be there; care about other people in the community.
- To define “real American” is very difficult
- We are all immigrants
- Within the same culture and communities, there are still differences
- Views of individuals depend on families- generation change?
- Less of a generation change, more of a family change
- Depends on economic situation
- Media impacts these views

View 6: When new immigrants do well, racism gets worse.
- Roots in institutional racism- civil rights laws
- Creates backlash and is worse for existing minorities
- People all bring prejudices with them
- People being stopped from succeeding because of discrimination
- People all have their own points of view
- Part of the problem is trying to provide jobs for all people
- People with higher education are less discriminatory or racist towards others
- Individuals need meaningful work
- Now harder to find jobs-fewer jobs and more people.
- To address racism head-on, institutions must be educated.
- Must change each person one at a time because it is an issue of the heart

View 7: If this is the Land of the Free, leave me be.
- We are constantly evolving
- People must accept that America is changing
- People need meaningful work to have a meaningful life.
- Create a culture center in the community- also would create jobs

Wrap-Up
- New immigrants coming to the community make us look outside of ourselves.
- Schools need to extend themselves
- People must look outside of what is comfortable
- Everyone here wants something better and that is encouraging
- People must be taught how to address their rights
Employers must be fair to the people they are employing instead of taking advantage of them.
- Education is important.
- Individual views change when it becomes personal.

**Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary**: Tuesday, May 3, 2011

**Location**: First Baptist Church, 3020 30th Street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance**: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Ellen Adams  
(X) Steve Andich  
(X) Ann Bragg  
(X) Laura Dunn-Wriedt  
(X) Linda Golden  
( ) Anthony Heddleston  
( ) Anel Hernandez  
(X) Amy Hunter  
(X) Kakoz Muzaliwa  
(X) Kendra Pekorny  
(X) Norma Reiplinger  
(X) Eria Roberts  
(X) Terry Stimpson  
( ) Joseph Thawn  
(X) Vincent Thomas  
(X) Kim Trapp  
(X) Morten Wabayaombwe  
(X) Johnnie Woods  
(X) Kay York

**Session 4- What Should We Do About Immigration and Community Change in Rock Island?**

**Community Impressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>In Rock Island, every child receives a quality education</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Employment</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Rock Island’s health care system serves the needs of all our residents</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing in Rock Island is affordable, available, clean and safe for all residents</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, etc.) reflect the diversity of our population</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Media</td>
<td>Local media offer fair and full coverage about immigrants and refugees</td>
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<td>Public Services</td>
<td>All neighborhoods in Rock Island have access to public services (such as refuse, recycling, road maintenance, transit, police and fire protection, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has equal access to clothing, food and everyday items.</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>The social services system in Rock Island (such as job training, immigrant/refugee services, child welfare, etc.) meets everyone’s needs</td>
<td>2</td>
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**Evaluating Impressions**

- The city is eliminating low-income housing for its own identity.
- The Quad Cities rely on industries for employment- we need new employment opportunities for new immigrants, refugees, and long-term residents
- Many people have a negative view of Rock Island
- There are many privately owned properties that are vacant.
- Schools go above and beyond the call of duty

**Approaches to Change**

**Categories that performed the best**: Healthcare, Shopping, Public Services

**Health Care**:
- Agencies doing well: Community Health Care, School-Health LINK, Transitions Mental Health, Youth Service Bureau
- Robert Young Center- silent agency, not clear what’s happening there
- Often drugs are prescribed instead of offering therapy; easier to medicate
- Quick Emergency Room
- Quick, timely mental health care

**Public Services**
- Public transportation in Rock Island is good.

**Categories that performed the worst**: Leadership, Housing, Employment

**Leadership**:
- Lack of diversity in leadership - the mayor should appoint more diversified people to boards and commissions.
- The only diverse leadership is through elected individuals.
- The leadership has never been representative of Rock Island.
- Change boundaries within city for elections?
- Leadership must be educated on immigration and refugee issues.
- Have the city have a protocol of level of diversity that represent the community.
- Groups are under-represented.
- Gather information on ethnic makeup of city, and compare to ethnic makeup of leadership; make leaders may not be aware of disparities.
- There are few, if any, refugees working for the government.

**Housing:**
- Housing for refugees and immigrants is not good and must be changed - housing choice is limited.
- Tenants are often penalized for complaining.
- Landlords kick out refugees even though damages were already there.
- Must educate renters of their rights and responsibilities.
  - Need a preliminary checklist for landlords to go over with renters.
  - Training workshops of renters rights and responsibilities like KeyStone Neighborhood's workshop; renters and landlords attend.
  - Manual of what makes a good landlord and what makes a good tenant.
- All lower income people have problems with housing, not just immigrants/refugees.

**Employment:**
- Adult education should be vocational.
  - Must train refugees in "life skills".
- Create a business incubator for refugees to start new businesses in vacant building (like Audubon School, Seaford's building); this could include schooling, business space rentals, translators, volunteering, etc.
  - Recruit volunteers through RSVP (retired seniors group).
  - Similar to the ARTery and Bucktown (in Davenport).
- Workshop to educate immigrants/refugees about starting a business.

**Other Action Ideas:**
- Need for legal services for immigrants and refugees.
  - An immigration lawyer or office in Rock Island.
- There are often interpretation issues; interpreters do not correctly interpret what refugee means.
  - "lost in translation".
- Use the faith community to help with issues related to housing, employment, etc.
  - Mentoring through faith communities where volunteers act as mediators and mentors.
- Create a directory for immigrants and refugees to use as a resource.
  - Build on Immigration Fact Sheet.

**Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary: Tuesday, May 9, 2013**

**Location:** First Baptist Church, 3020 30th Street, Rock Island, IL.

**Attendance:**
- (X) Present
- ( ) Absent

(X) Ellen Adams  
(X) Steve Andich  
(X) Ann Bragg  
(X) Laura Dunn-Wriedt  
(X) Linda Golden  
( ) Anthony Heddesten  
( ) Avel Hernandez  
( ) Amy Hunter  
(X) Kakozzi Muzaliwa  

(X) Kendra Pokorny  
(X) Norma Reiplinger  
( ) Eria Roberts  
(X) Terry Stephenson  
(X) Joseph Thawn  
(X) Vincent Thomas  
(X) Kim Trapp  
(X) Morten Wabyambe  
(X) Johnnie Woods  
(X) Kay York

**Session 5 - Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?**

1. Acting individually or in small groups, how can we help our community make progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?
   - Articles/features in newspapers generate awareness; send letters or e-mails to editor or talk with editors.
   - Use information we have learned to teach others.
   - Continue study circles.
   - Volunteering - tell others about volunteering; mentor families; cultural training for volunteering, mentor for job searching - talk to employers.

2. Working with institutions or with agencies, how can we help our community make progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?
   - Cater to diverse cuisines; program to teach how to shop on budget; involve immigrants/refugee groups in this process.
   - Refugee resettlement agencies should talk to stores about specific refugee needs.
   - Community center - MLK center.
   - Combine refugee directory with others.
   - Immigration law with legal services already offered in Rock Island.
- Hold groups in MLK Center for refugees, immigrants, and all community members.
- “Experienced” refugees come in about once a week to answer questions for newer refugees or community members.
- Expand policies in city to better suit needs of immigrants/increase immigrants knowledge of laws and policies.
- Survey agencies to see what they offer for immigrants.
- Volunteer “supplements”

4. What is the single most important step to improve everyday life in Rock Island for immigrants/refugees?

- Language
- Knowledge/Understanding for long-time residents
- Micro-loans
- Central place for immigrants- center
- Trained interpreters
- Distinguish between immigrants and refugees
- Employment
- Education-practical, living skills, cultural skills; train self-sufficiency
- Immigrant community education, guidebook
- Support groups
- Education must be relative to background of individuals
- Legal services for immigrants/refugees
- Mental health services for refugees
- Housing
- Speakers bureau
- Tenant organizations
- Representative in community/city employee

Action Ideas- Condensed List:
- Community/Refugee Center
- Practical education/living skills
- Support groups
- Letters to editor/contact media
- Directory for refugees
- Renter/landlord handbook
- Harness volunteers
- Legal services
- City employee for refugees

Idea to Share at Action Forum:
Establish a Community Center for Refugees
- Housed in MLK Center
- Monitored by trained refugees and volunteers
- Continuation of services
- Support Groups
- Practical Education (living skills, work skills)
- City liaison for refugees
Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Sunday, April 10, 2011

Location: St. John’s Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Beatrice Ajibola
(X) Benjamin Ajibola
(X) Thomas Benson
(X) Tika Bista
(X) Andy Boswell
(X) Nick Camlin
(X) Angela Handley
(X) Karalyn Jevaney
(X) Matilda Lao
(X) Mark McVey
(X) Zona Mundt
(X) Mwansa Mushimata
(X) Joshua Schipp
(X) John Henry Schroeder
(X) Margaret Tweet
(X) Ed Hanna

Scenarios for Discussion

Scenario #3: Some parents worry about the schooling their children are getting. The classes are crowded. Many of the other students are new immigrants/refugees and demand a lot of the teacher’s time.
- Refugee students graduate from high school with no background in English
- One participant observed students who were in 10th grade but had the proficiency of a 3rd grader.
- They can speak and write but, they don’t understand the meaning.
- We need to change the future
  o Participants discussed their interactions with the school system.
- A question was brought up about how students are placed in appropriate grade levels.

- Discussed community resources, particularly churches and various non-profits.
- The goal of these meetings is to collect ideas for the action forum.
- Discussed being bilingual and translation; children must translate for their parents.
- We must change the future and keep the youth out of gangs.
- Discussed experiences growing up in Rock Island.
- The U.S. is a melting pot, that’s what makes us who we are.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Sunday, April 17, 2011

Location: St. John’s Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Beatrice Ajibola
(X) Benjamin Ajibola
(X) Thomas Benson
(X) Tika Bista
(X) Andy Boswell
(X) Nick Camlin
(X) Angela Handley
(X) Karalyn Jevaney
(X) Matilda Lao
(X) Mark McVey
(X) Joshua Schipp
(X) John Henry Schroeder
(X) Margaret Tweet

Session 2- Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

Describe Your America

1. What are/were your expectations of this country about living in the United States?
   Own property
   - Freedom
   - Opportunity
   - Chance to do something
   - Built in advantages/disadvantages
   - Professional skills and degrees from home country are not recognized
   - Citizens can be free
   - Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
   - Bill of Rights
   - Government of the people, by the people, and for the people

2. Was there a time where you or your family lived better? Has your prosperity improved over the generations?
   - Prosperity has improved- struggled with the marker of an Hispanic last name growing up
   - Prosperity has improved since graduation from college and living on his own. Able to help parents and treat siblings.
- Spent time in a refugee camp. Maybe it takes time for prosperity to improve.
- For some, the American dream is just a dream. The new generation may have a greater struggle ahead of them due to the present state of the economy.
- Prosperity has also improved since graduation from college. However, prosperity declined when father passed away in the early 1990s.
  - Born at the end of the Great Depression. Has lower expectations, maybe due to growing up on a farm.
    - Going out to eat is an incredible blessing.
    - Prosperity has increased- children have at least equal level of prosperity.

4. Describe your American experience.
   - Key facets of the American experience:
     - Ability to own property
     - Participation
     - Responsibility
     - Freedom
     - Frustration
     - Continuation
   - Our American experience is changing- perhaps now more than ever
   - Waste and greed
   - We need to reevaluate our priorities
   - Heavily influenced by the media, government, and economy.

What Connects Us?
1. When and where do you feel part of the Rock Island community? What brings us together?
   - Doesn’t feel connected to Rock Island or a sense of community
     - Neighborhood issues. Connected to the Quad Cities, not Rock Island
   - Likes the size of Rock Island
   - Felt more attachment to Rock Island working for the Public Works Dept.
   - Feels most attachment to Rock Island when defending his community- wants to help Rock Island
     - Common theme of defending Rock Island and rejecting stereotypes associated with it
     - Festivals
     - Neighborhoods
     - Events
     - Focus groups
     - Schools
     - The history of the area

2. Describe what separates us in our community.
   - America is a melting pot.
   - Perceptions of law enforcement
     - 3 children were brought down to the station without talking to their parents.
     - Kelton Trice shooting in East Moline
   - Turnkey Project
   - Flintstone Village

3. Do you feel more attachment to America or to Rock Island?
   - America is Rock Island and Rock Island is America

Engaging in America
1. What does it mean to live in the United States?
   - Hope
   - Opportunity
   - Peace

2. What does it mean to be an American?
   - People can live the way that they chose and live within their means
   - They are free to speak their minds and worship as they choose
   - The best form of civic engagement is protest

3. Do you know how to engage in civic opportunities like neighborhood or ethnic associations, boards and commissions, public meetings, voting, etc? How do you engage? How can access be made better?
   - Being engaged in the political process
   - Involvement in a Congressional campaign
   - Freedom isn’t free; you have to fight for it.
   - We, as citizens, respond to immediate threats.
4. What will help the transition of immigrants and refugees into Rock Island?
   - Find a leader within that group
   - Open lines of communication
   - Better relationship with law enforcement
   - Make them feel comfortable
   - Community picnic.

Wrap Up
- Don't rely on the government
- Community-based is the way to go
- Be proactive
- We need to reach out ourselves
- "Do as I say, not as I do"
- We need to speak up and make others feel more comfortable

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Sunday, May 1, 2011

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present  ( ) Absent

(X) Beatrice Ajibola
(X) Benjamin Ajibola
( ) Thomas Benson
( ) Tika Bista
(X) Andy Boswell
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(X) Karalyn Jevaney
( ) Matilda Lao
(X) Mark MoVey
(X) Joshua Schipp
(X) John Henry Schroeder
(X) Margaret Tweet

Session 3- How is our Community Changing?

Views for Discussion

View 1: Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.
   - If you migrate from one place to another you should learn the language
   - English is the #1 language everywhere, it is the language of commerce
   - In their home country, they learned English from elementary school on
   - Additional funds need to be made available for ESL/ELL classes
     ○ Programs must be available outside of school hours
   - Children pick up language fast
     ○ High school students struggle learning languages
     ○ Research has shown if they are comfortable with their native language first you can easily pick up a second language
   - Children get excited when teachers respect their native languages
   - Phonics should be taught
   - Reading with aid of computers?

View 3: Social service workers or police are viewed as heavy handed, reporting situations in refugee communities too quickly.
   - How can police understand culture?
   - Different ways that Africans bring up their children versus Americans
   - Rules and regulations in the U.S. do not allow traditional ways to bring up children
   - Parents there are more strict
   - Any culture that brings out the best in children is the best that I can imagine
   - When you are old, you will have peace of mind
   - Playing is privilege not a right
   - Different views of punishment
   - Expect children to do the best to their potential, not perfection
   - If teachers expect more, children will do better
   - Home life reflects on kids when they come to school
   - Government should not put the blame on teachers
   - Refugees don't know what's happening in the classroom
   - They need mentors
   - Children can be manipulative
   - Refugees can be befriended by the "fringe" children not those with stable homes
   - Break up families
   - One refugee member's son was bullied

View 2: We have stopped trying to keep our common culture.
   - 2 distinct groups of people trying to hold on to an America that was
   - The threat is not refugees/immigrants. It is the corporations
- We should have an event at Schwiebert Park, a gathering with police, fire fighters and refugees
  - How could they trust the police to attend? Concerns with profiling
  - If they participate, they should wear their plain clothes
  - They could bring their families
- Someone in uniform triggers grueling memories; some refugees have witnessed wars and sexual assault by soldiers
  - Police should be enlightened, maybe a presentation to the police department
  - They need to recognize the culture, and sometimes have female police officers

View 6: When new immigrants do well, racism gets worse.
- We need to educate each other
- We are all descendents of immigrants
- Welfare stimulation
- Not all but so many Americans look at immigrants like parasites
- They are people who can contribute to greatness
- Animosity against illegal immigrants
- Ignorance
- 3 months with World Relief is all they get
- Fear of government
- Necessary contact numbers should be provided, like a magnet with a bunch of important numbers
- Set of assumptions, they are entitled to have rights
- Your rights as a citizens should be explained; “legal rights”
- Churches need to unite to help people
- Call for Action

Wrap up
- Refugee children can game the system/ get something on their parents
- Respect the way that children are raised in different cultures
- Importance of getting the police involved
- Children can’t see that discipline is something that will ultimately benefit them
- Kids may be crying wolf
- Suggest that there is a police officer that specializes in immigration issues
- Representative from each minority group make a presentation to city employees about their child rearing practices
- Taskforce to present to police or during teacher’s in-service days
- Meetings once a month
- Morality taught them how to deal
- 3-4 most important of immigrants coming to the community;
  - Respect, success wanted for children, celebrate every culture and every holiday
  - We don’t have mutual respect in every aspect
- Islamic laws now that they are in America, they have to follow our laws
- What freedom means
- Laws are interpreted differently
- Kids want to be rich
- Clash of cultures
- Everybody get together and eat food, like a worldwide potluck; similar to Harvest Festival
- We learn to be more tolerant, it opens our eyes to see beyond ourselves
- School concerns at a young age
- Employment
- Specialized degrees in our country
- Animosity/people are intolerant
- The man should be in the work force idea
  - Men should be the head of the household
  - The women are easier at finding jobs sometimes
  - Tremendous cultural problem
  - For illiterate immigrants however, the men are okay with the women working
  - Family as one, not the case anymore
  - Man as spiritual head
- America should relate with those people too
- Some refugees have the idea that America is the land of gold
- Kids are tomorrow’s future
- We just need to educate each other
- Tension between African Americans and African refugees
  - “Say I can do it”
  - Don’t put others down
- Determination
- We’re all the same, we are here to do this together
Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Beatrice Ajobola
(X) Benjamin Ajobola
(X) Thomas Benson
(X) Tika Bista
(X) Andy Boswell
(X) Nick Camlin
(X) Angela Handley

(X) Karalyn Jevaney
(X) Matilda Lao
(X) Mark McVey
(X) Joshua Schipp
(X) John Henry Schroeder
(X) Margaret Tweet

Others present: Khada Regmi

Session 4 - What Should We Do About Immigration and Community Change in Rock Island?

Community Impressions Survey

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Health Care
- Inequalities have grown. The question is: do we have access to it? Programs are not for the middle class. There is nothing for the hardworking people.
- Hospitals: Enough to compete with each other, customer service standards. Emergency care won't be denied to anyone.
- There are also a number of free clinics available.
- There is a lot of stigma associated with the medical card.

Education
- It doesn't say "the opportunity for a quality education." 70% of the Rocky grads who enter Blackhawk need to take remedial classes. Wording of question was purposeful.
- HeadStart is diverse otherwise there are mostly white teachers in the school.
- Arsenal children go to Moline schools. We will not what it's like to have white privilege.

Employment
- Due to their education and language barriers, they are not getting opportunities. One example of a job is a dishwasher. (Meets everyone's needs compared to what, compared to the refugee camp.)
- At the Moline Public Library, there is an organization that provides services for immigrants.
- To get a job is very difficult.

Shopping
- If someone doesn't have a car, they cannot access food, clothing, and everyday items. For example, the west end has little access to stores.
- Why doesn't the township get involved?
- Some clothing stores include Goodwill and Salvation Army.

Criminal Justice
- If you have money you have rights.
- There is a conflict between immigrant families and African American families. Sometimes, we have to call the police. In Century Woods, there was a noise disturbance. Deep-seeded racial bias, arrests based on skin color, ride-alongs, demographic sheets
- White collar crime is a different type of crime
- DWB = Driving While Black

Housing
- Comparable housing, some neighbors violate rules or realtors change wording.
- There are slum lords.
- People complain we don't have enough expensive housing. Discussion of various new housings development.
- I can't remember when so many houses were for sale in Rock Island.

Leadership
- City Hall is composed of mostly white males.
- Banks and credit unions cater to a different clientele.
- Discrepancy between leadership and people it serves.

Media
- The culture of media is advertising tragedy. We need to make people aware of what's going on.

Approaches to Change
- We discussed good paying jobs.
- You need to know somebody to get a job at the Arsenal.
- People tend to like people who are like themselves.
- Communication breakdown.
- We must encourage people to do things. What can we do now?
- Somebody should direct these people (Refugees)
- "Going the speed limit" Driving story.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Sunday, May 15, 2011

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, 4501 7th Avenue, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Beatrice Ajbola (X) Karalyn Jevaney
( ) Benjamin Ajbola ( ) Matilda Lao
( ) Thomas Benson (X) Mark McVey
( ) Tika Bista (X) Joshua Schipp
(X) Andy Boswell (X) John Henry Schroeder
(X) Nick Camlin ( ) Margaret Tweet
(X) Angela Handley

Session 5- Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?

Crafting Action Steps Together

1. Acting individually or in small groups, how can we help our community make progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?
   - Open mindedness on an individual basis
   - Open dialogue to bring down walls
   - Provide transportation
   - Volunteer with programs
   - Befriend families/reach out
   - Host family/ Adopt A Family to integrate refugees into the community.

2. Working with institutions or with agencies, how can we help our community make progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?
   - Learn English
   - Invite the community to participate
   - Liaison/partner/host- volunteer position
   - Spread the word
   - Have an officer trained to work with immigrants: Police Liaison Officer; anonymous hotline
   - Protect them from fraud
   - Teach rules
   - Promote access to information- contact info magnet
   - Community Picnic to address trust issues
   - Volunteer police force
   - Create a multilingual catalog of available resources
   - Use institutions to provide information to communities they serve
   - Inform service providers on needs of immigrant/refugee families (police, schools, banks, stores, etc.)
   - Open House- community fair with sponsors like CCC, business, government representatives, public officials
   - Cultural Festival- government officials present; at Douglas Park
   - Community Gardens; children plant flowers. Encourage City to promote access to garden lots for immigrant/refugee families
3. Name the most important ways to increase civic engagement by immigrants/refugees.
   - Learn English
   - Duplicate immigration booklet
   - Harvest Festival
   - Social Ministry vs. Social Justice
   - Start an ethnic/cultural board with representatives from each ethnic group and Neighborhood Partners Task Force members. Meet monthly/quarterly.

4. What is the single most important step to improve education for immigrants/refugees?
   - Create Student Mentoring Program

5. Name some strategies that can reduce the disruption of services due to the influx of immigrants/refugees.
   - Teachers have to focus on immigrants, time outside the classroom to work with students
   - Education at Broadway Church

6. What are some steps other communities/agencies have taken in regards to immigrants/refugees that can be adopted in Rock Island?
   - Black Hawk College, Broadway Presbyterian Church, United Church of Peace
   - Community Center- bring in businesses- potential new customers
   - Form Chamber of Commerce; what the new population can offer us, and what we can offer them. Small business development loans

**Ideas for Action Forum:**

1. Institute a Police Liaison for immigrant/refugee families
2. Cultural Festival
   - Government officials present (police, fire, etc.)
   - At Schwiebert Park, Douglas Park, or another park.
3. Start Ethnic-Cultural Board
   - Representatives from each ethnic group and Neighborhood Partners task force members.
   - Meet monthly/quarterly.
4. Create Student Mentoring Program.
   - Student-tutoring partners with American Student Program.
   - Student credits for helping
Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 1114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Peter Chege
(X) Emily Dipple
(X) Travis Greenlee
(X) Carlos Jimenez
( ) Leen Kago
(X) Jason Lopez
(X) Amanda Makula
( ) Kabura Marita
( ) Esau Minani
( ) Emmanuel Musinga

( ) Lukole Mustafa
( ) Michel Ndiyabandi
(X) Glenda Nickie
(X) Allen Nyirantore
( ) Susan Simbatohana
(X) Nyamutarutwa Tantine
(X) Jean Baptist Twizerumukiza
(X) Jonas Musafiri
(X) Hector Vasquez
(X) Ricardo Morales

How are we alike?
- Family first
- We are all humans
- Must care about the community since we are here
- Have traveled/experienced different cultures/ethnic groups (Not every single individual but it is a shared characteristic for several members of the group)
- Had experience in language as a barrier

How are we different?
- We come from different places (Mexico, Congo, Rural Iowa)
- Some know Spanish
- Different ethnic groups

How do hearing languages that you are not familiar with make you feel?
- I feel like the foreign language is just noise, maybe they are talking about me.
- I remember as a kid that I felt embarrassed when my parents spoke to me in public places in Spanish when everyone around me spoke English.
- They are trying to assimilate to English
- One individual noticed that they hear numerous languages more so now in the Rock Island community than they used to—languages other than English and Spanish.

Scenarios for Discussion

Scenario 1: Refugee family’s rent increased once a family member received a well paying job at Tyson.
- I can relate—this has happened to some of my friends. They do not know what exactly they can do when this happens. Another issue is when the government does not consider us or families like us for subsidized housing.
- I can remember scenarios where refugee moved into a community and the larger ethnic group of that population was upset. (specifically referring to a Mexican family moving into an all black area)
- Government spending and budgets are often times every difficult to understand at first. We are seeing a good example of the government maze.
- Income guidelines are very frustrating. The more you make the more they take—by increasing your rent they are actually trying to motivate you to move elsewhere so that that particular low income housing can then be available to the next refugee family can use it.

Scenario 3: Some parents worry about the schooling their children are getting. The classes are crowded. Many of the other students are new immigrants/refugees and demand a lot of the teacher’s time.
- My children are in the United States, and I must let them go to school. The problem is that the children are put into schools and their grade level is based on their age, not their abilities.
- Where they are from children do not have the opportunity for school because of war and hardship. (referencing life back in the Congo)
- My daughter was put into a 7th grade classroom when she cannot even write her name—is this education?
- In a Chicago suburb they have “New comers” school—a school where you are put into classes and grade levels based on your abilities. At these school age is irrelevant.
- At age 12 I came from Mexico and it was very hard to assimilate not knowing the culture of America.

Scenario 5: An immigrant/refugee sees his children behave in ways that would in his home country seem disrespectful to him and other elders. He cannot speak fluent English and is also uncertain how one would approach the children’s teachers about this problem.
- Due to the culture and language barrier this is very difficult.
- I don’t want to disrespect the teachers; it’s huge when a child disrespects a teacher.
- Difficult to find an interpreter for the parents to obtain such communication.
- Probably difficult for the child also; trying to assimilate and act like the other children.
- I remember seeing the Mexican American students behaving in that manner (with disrespect) and then I acted in that way to fit in.
Scenario 9: An immigrant/refugee teenager is attacked and physically harmed by American students on their way home from school and the culprits are arrested. To the surprise of the immigrant/refugee’s parents and the immigrant/refugee community, the American students are released, seemingly without punishment.
- Add to that where the refugee gets in trouble and seemingly more trouble because of the misunderstanding (inability to explain themselves due to language).
- Refugee children adapt to the bad behavior—hard for the parents to control that situation. Back home the children know how to behave.
- The refugee children assimilate and begin to show troublesome behavior.
- The child or refugee cannot really express himself or herself. Innocent persons are held responsible because they cannot express the truth or anything clearly.

Wrap-Up
- People are used to hearing Spanish and it’s just kind of ignored.
- She appreciates and has learned more about new children and how they came into the community.
- Learned through other people what people have ignorance too. Many things are new to me and now I have some ideas why they are behaving the way they are (referring to her children).
- Honestly, I am happy, this experience opened my horizons and this will be beneficial for my children.
- As a community, we will be facing a lot of challenges; especially for the children.
- More diverse here (in Rock Island) than I thought— they are going through what I did years ago.
- I am very concerned about the children. I hope teachers are being trained to serve these children.
- I came here thinking about adults—I learned more about these issues that the children and teachers face.

The group agreed to begin at 5:15 next Tuesday.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary, Tuesday, April 19, 2011

Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 1114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Peter Chege
(X) Emily Dipple
(X) Travis Greenlee
(X) Carlos Jimenez
( ) Leen Kago
(X) Jason Lopez
(X) Amanda Makula
(X) Kabura Marita
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(X) Glenda Nicke
(X) Allen Nyirantore
(X) Susan Simbakohana
(X) Nyamutarutwa Tantine
(X) Jean Baptist Twizerumukiz
( ) Jonas Musafiri
( ) Hector Vasquez
( ) Ricardo Morales

Others Present: Vynamungu Ntwimana, Ndayishimiye Esau

Session 2: Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

Describe Your America

What are/were your expectations about living in the United States? Describe your American experience.
- I would be relieved of the trauma that I experienced in my home country.
  - I was put in housing that I couldn’t afford; ran out of money to pay for my basic needs.
- Immigration office assured us that we would have everything we need- nice house, no worries, and no troubles.
  o First apartment that the government gave me had no furniture. Not trying to complain, things just didn’t turn out the way I was told.
  o Gave me a separate file for my guardian and said that they were going to come later. Went back to the immigration office to find out when my guardian would be arriving- told me that it would $2,275. Without a job here there is no life. The government should tell you the truth.
  o Must have a house of my own, a job, and be established before my children could come over. They did not tell me the truth.
  o It is difficult because you don’t speak English. Even though I don’t speak English I still need a job.
- When you don’t know English, employers fire you without telling you what you did wrong. They didn’t give you any basic language training.
- When you want to apply for citizenship, you must go with a translator if you can’t speak English—how can I pay for that?
- Some take classes at Black Hawk.
  o Classes need to be extended- need more classroom time.
  o Difficult because people need to learn the basics before they can move forward.
  o Long waiting lists for ESL classes in the QCA.
  o Frustrating for Black Hawk- trying to find enough teachers and funding to pay teachers.
- Coming here as an older person I was excited for my children.
  o Got a job that paid $5 an hour. Rent was $1,400 a month, without utilities- couldn’t save
  o Some of our children are graduating from high school—how will our children go to college? We do not have that kind of money.
- Cannot compare life in home country to life in the U.S. Life is different here, too.
  o United Nations said we would get free and nice housing; assured us we would be happy and forget about the traumatic things we have gone through.
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<td>1st Baptist</td>
<td>St. John's</td>
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<td>CODITY</td>
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- The first apartment they gave me did not have heating and air-conditioning.
- Assistance office could not give me anymore than money for rent.
- If the government had more money to provide us with education we could then apply for more jobs.
- We have to pay the usual bills and repay the money for the flight to the government. The airfare debt is also put in the refugees' credit report, making it hard to qualify for other loans.
- Still have children in Africa; they left the camp because they had been waiting there so long.
- The government should approach us; the government is not poor.
- Came from Mexico not knowing any English. After two years I wanted to go back. It takes seven years to learn English socially.
- Need to develop a testing tool to discover immigrants' skill levels and what education they need.
- Need to understand that our children are experiencing the same stress and frustration.
- When I came to the United States I was very excited.
- Most frustrating thing was that my children were put in classes that exceeded their skill levels.
- Wanted basic things/necessities that the other children had, but we couldn’t afford any of those things.

What Connects Us?

When do you feel part of the Rock Island community?
- This group is the first time that I have really felt a part of this community. Right now talking, helping me solve my problems.
- Love for everybody
- Respecting the rules and the regulations, love for people that live in the country.
- If there is love in a place when others put themselves in your shoes, tying everything together.
- When there is love you tell people about your problems (speaking about the ideas of self-disclosure)
- Happy I live in Rock Island
- I know we have talked a lot about our insufficiencies, but the government is still helping me provide for my family - food stamps, government medical card, etc.

What is one thing that makes you part of Rock Island?
- If there is a problem in the neighborhood we get together to solve it.
- This group - so good to hear about the experiences and the differences
- There is togetherness; people will struggle to help you, no matter the skin color or difference.
- Very happy and I appreciate this. Very few white people that come to Africa. Now here they are here to help.
- Rock Island and its people are supportive - medical cards and food stamps. People are nicer here. Someone came to my house the other day and donated some clothes for my children.
- Wife calls me a professional volunteer - I volunteer for many organizations in Rock Island.
- I enjoy working at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center! Unfortunately, we only come together in times of crisis.
- I appreciate the food stamps; I like this group. I would like medical assistance though and I don’t know how to get it.
- Rock Island supports people here - needs to continue supporting new comers. RI is a much better place than where I landed (Many of the refugees in the group landed in Utah, Idaho, and Kentucky).

Do you feel more attachment to America or to Rock Island?
- Response was overwhelmingly America.

Engaging in America

What does it mean to live in the United States and to be an American?
- It is my duty to build a bigger, better United States of America.
- Have rights, securities, and duties. As a citizen you are able to work and develop your family.
- It is an extraordinary thing: In my case if my children are citizens they work and develop the country.
- There are a lot of different people working together to better one another and the country.
- To try and make the reality match the dream of what America is.
- Being patriotic, loving America. Because if you are patriotic you are happy about the government and its people.
- Working hard like paying taxes, financially supporting the country.
- Freedom of expression. You don’t have boundary to opportunities and you can work in various locations.

Wrap Up

What did you learn in this session?
- How we love America, life in Rock Island
- Issues about jobs
- People were never given what they were promised when coming to America.
- Togetherness, unity, and love among Americans.
- Why did you choose Rock Island? Was it by Choice?
  - Where we landed there were so many problems there. Heard about Rock Island and how it was different from where we first landed so we moved here.

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**Shangpont Facts: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary:** Tuesday, April 23, 2013

**Location:** CCC at Church of Peace, 114 12th street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance:**
- (X) Present
- ( ) Absent

45
Session 3- How is Our Community Changing?

Views for Discussion

View 1: Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.
- It might be challenging, but how or what can we give to the school to help- need to help the schools
  - Children need a strong foundation and need to be successful in school- A big issue exists with children being placed in grade levels that are beyond their capacities.
    - A child with the abilities of a 5th grader should not be placed in an 8th grade classroom. The schools should have someone multilingual so this person could be a great tool to help the children learn.
  - Children who are 18 and older are not allowed to enroll in high school or basic school.
  - There is a language barrier for students as well as their parents; could be much better if the school system had someone who could help these children understand things. Need someone who can better explain—Bilingual or multilingual teachers who can speak English as well as the refugees language.
  - This view could be more powerful or beneficial if they had proof: statistics and facts to support the claims being made.
  - Our schools have difficulties teaching the current students let alone the newcomers. Children are going to grow up and be young members of society. I would like to see the schools receive more resources and funding to provide the students with more one on one and small group experiences.

View 2: Social Service workers or police are viewed as heavy handed, reporting situations in refugee communities too quickly.
- Culture is different here. In Africa the teachers were allowed to punish a child for bad behavior. We believe in God believe that disciplining your child is critical to their growth and development, to get them ready for a good future and good life.
  - If a child misbehaves the police will just take him or her to jail for a while.
  - Our children haven’t yet understood and don’t understand the culture enough to make a distinction. In our culture each time a child broke a rule we just came together as families and settled the matter. If the two families couldn’t solve the conflict, then the authorities were called. It is not that way here. We cannot discipline our kids as we do traditionally in our culture- not happy about that. Right now we have many children in police custody. For the first time they may take this child to jail for weeks/months and the family is upset because we did not get the opportunity to discipline and be parents.
  - This is a very big problem.
  - Parents are not taught the different rules in the United States about how they are allowed to teach their children. They need to be taught the rules and guidelines of this country. Afraid to discipline their child in their cultural way because of the possible consequences. They are afraid they may get “caught” or “seen”.
    - The level of communication when they enter the U.S. needs to be better. These are simple fixes if we can communicate them.
  - Loves the U.S., but hates some of the rules to govern children.
    - One of her kids cannot talk walked outside and the police just picked him up and brought the child back to the house. Two days later a lady came to the house and started telling the mother how to raise her children. “The child was just a short ways from the front door.” I have raised 12 children and I felt offended and insulted because this (DCPS) younger person was telling me how to raise my children and degrading me.
    - When you are raising a child, you give them instructions and rules to follow. When they violate these three times you punish them, or they go to repeat the same poor action. Here they say if you beat your child you go to prison. A child growing up in prison will not grow well and his heart will be hardened. He will meet people who are destroyed. If you do not discipline your children it means you are spoiling your children. We know as parents when to call for help—we do not want the authorities to step in before we do.
    - Sounds like what my mother went through in the 1940’s. Her parents were used to a type of punishment. When they faded away the kids were a bit wilder. All you need to do is go to any store and you will see a child disobey their parents—so I don’t think even Americans have child discipline figured out.
      - Of course we cannot change the American culture, “when in Rome do as the Romans do”, and try and adopt the culture to some level but we have our own culture too. Now we say “don’t do that I will whip you”, our children’s response is “I will call the police if you whip me.” The children are adopting bad behavior. We will be able to learn down the road but the Americans should understand us.
      - Also, we can’t allow our children to lose our culture. We cannot forget we don’t want it to be forgotten. For us to keep our culture the government should allow us to use our same ways of disciplining our children.

View 5: New cultures make our community better.
- That is a good view.
- Two people cannot share a journey until they trust one another. When we can celebrate our culture and the host community can actively participate in that celebration, then that would be great.
  - Where I came from we are Christians and we believe in God, but we don’t have books to read, as far as supporting our beliefs. We need help getting religious texts that we can read. That could work if there was/ a host community that could do that for us.
  - People have to be allowed to use their culture so that they can explain/show their children the right behavior. Learning though example.
- Why has rest of my family not arrived in America as I was promised?
  - Common concern to be worried about the current whereabouts of family members who have yet to arrive in America. This worry puts a large burden of stress on the refugees.

**Wrap-Up**

What are the three or four biggest concerns we face in our community around immigration, race, language, schools, and employment? Why are these concerns so important?

1. **Education**
   a. Bus transportation is a huge issue. Children need transportation; cannot get to some schools because there's no transportation to get them there.

2. **Police/Immigration**
   - The police instill fear in the refugees/immigrants. The refugee community feels that their cultures are neither recognized nor respected by the police/government. There is need to recognize that different cultures have their own ways of raising children and are not seen as "spoiling refugee/immigrant children" by failing to give parents a chance to be parents.

3. **Work and employment**
   - Employers should look at someone's skill set, not just their language capabilities
   - Want to work to positively contribute to the economy and afford college for our children.

4. **Housing issues**
   - 11 people in household—difficult to find low income housing for this many people. Been applying for apartments for 2 1/2 years. Said they couldn't split us up into 2 apartments. Still need to receive government help even though her husband has a job.
   - Before I started working I was living in a low-income apartment—rent $900 without utilities
   - No known standard rent for working or unemployed people—people don't know how much they're supposed to pay; they're getting over-charged; their rent goes up when the get jobs.

*Family unification (not in top four, but worth noting)*

- Problem for older children—when they reach a certain age they are on their own with only food stamps, no medical card, not working. What happens when they get sick, not allowed to live with their families.

- There is a need to keep the ESL classes running! Soon they will be citizens.
  - No time to go to ESL classes when they have to work during the day. After 5 years they are eligible to take the citizenship test—how can they take it if they cannot read the test?

- One group member's top three concerns:
  1. How to increase success for immigrant children in schools
  2. Limit interaction for police/DVCS services with immigrant families; they need to understand the refugees' cultures first.
  3. Racism: it is going to dictate the success of the action plan in some ways.

**Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary: Tuesday, May 3, 2011**

**Location:** CCC at Church of Peace, 114 12th street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance:**

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<tr>
<td>(X) Peter Chege</td>
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<td>( ) Hector Vasquez</td>
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<td>(X) Esau Minani</td>
<td>( ) Ricardo Morales</td>
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**Others present:** Patrick Noya

**Session 4: What Should We Do About Immigrant and Community Change in Rock Island?**

**Community Impressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>In Rock Island, every child receives a quality education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Rock Island's health care system serves the needs of all our residents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing in Rock Island is affordable, available, clean and safe for all residents</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, neighborhoods, etc.) reflect the diversity of our population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Local media offer fair and full coverage about immigrants and refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>All neighborhoods in Rock Island have access to public services (such as refuse, recycling, road maintenance, transit, police and fire protection, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has equal access to clothing, food and everyday items.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>The social services system in Rock Island (such as job training, immigrant/refugee services, child welfare, etc.) meets everyone's needs</td>
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**Categories that performed the best:** Public Services, Shopping, Health Care

- I am going to speak of my experience. We relied on the fellow Mexicans in the community. We networked with one another. We learned where the service buildings were, where the jobs were, what police to avoid.

**Health Care:**

- When we go to the hospital they have good doctors and good care, they genuinely care about us. No one can understand us though because of the language barriers. Sometimes I have to call my child at school so she can help with the language problem. We need translators and the hospital should pay for them.

**Public Services:**

- Public Services are efficient because the area is clean. We do not see garbage around us. Garbage is a problem in the household because it causes disease.
- Public Services are good. I do not see any difference throughout Rock Island. All areas are taken care of as well as the next; race and difference do not dictate the level of cleanliness.
- Where I live the condition of the road is very bad. The potholes are terrible.
- I think that the city of Rock Island needs to work on getting/keeping more restaurants and businesses in the area.
- In these categories, are there disparities between recent immigrants/refugees and long-time residents?
- The difference is about the hospital because everyone speaks different languages.
- I was surprised shopping was so high because I think we do not always have the best access to shopping (proximity).
- Yes, Wal-Mart is very far away.
- I like the refugee community because those that can drive will drive others that cannot drive.
- All races and different populations of people shop everywhere. Shopping areas are not designated by difference; everyone is treated the same.
- Compensate the child when they leave school to translate at the hospital.

- One member of the group spoke about his experiences volunteering with a Refugee Outreach Group:
  - I have been volunteering trying to help at the hospitals and other areas. The organization has been trying to get some funding from the hospital. The hospital argues that they are already doing their share because they (the hospital) accept the immigrant/refugee health care cards. As a volunteer and I know these people personally, what am I suppose to do when they call me and need to go to the hospital? We end up taking them, but I have a family and a job of my own. Translating over the phone does not work because it takes too much time and is frustrating for the doctor. Why do we do this without any compensation for our volunteerism? I have my own troubles and things I care about like my family and work.
  - Has your group applied to some of the private foundations for money?
  - We just applied to a couple places. We just met with the mayor, but he could not make any promises to our organization.
  - Need to find some solution or middle ground with the hospital on the issue—flexibility
- There needs to be some discussion between the refugee/immune community and the hospital even if they disagree.

**Categories that performed the worst:** Criminal Justice, Education, and Employment

**Employment:**

- Some refugees do not get jobs. Ex. - We moved to Rock Island from Iowa and my son applied for a job. He passed the physical and they said they would call him. The Tyson plant in Iowa denied that he ever worked for them. The good thing for him is that he speaks English, but for us it is very hard. His former employer finally agreed that he had worked there two weeks later.
- I came to Rock Island from Kentucky where I worked for a chicken company for 1 year and 6 months and I never missed a day of work. When I applied at Tyson, they wanted me to verify my last address. Then they said with four months unemployment that they could not hire me.
- We do not have an African community of people to help us as the Mexicans did. As a result, we need help from the government because they brought us here.
Police:
- The police just take the child when they are outside. They do not communicate to the parent that they are taking their child. The police should first ask, "Why is the child outside?"
- The government brought us here knowing we do not speak English. Many times police just take people.

Housing:
- The house we live in now is a government house. When we moved in the doors and windows were broken and they wanted us to pay for them (Century Woods). We continue suffering, why do we suffer? The government agreed to give us the house. Something is wrong.

Education:
- Our children are in school but they do not benefit from being there. They advance in grade level, but they are not learning anything.
- I suggest having bilingual or multilingual teachers for the schools.
- For the kids in high school, they could use a separate program or curriculum. We need instructors who could help the refugee children understand the material better.
- As brought up in prior sessions, Rock Island has a need for a newcomer’s school.

In regards to the Families and People who were granted asylum in the U.S:
- The organization that was listed above spoke with 45 families—they were promised many things. If a family member could speak English, they would not get the ticket to come to the U.S. They were told that if you can read and write then you could find a job in Africa.
- It is very difficult because the people that move to the U.S. live in so many different cities where they are not nearby one another. We are so spread out.

Steps that the Mexican community took to translate into the Quad Cities:
- Communication is key
- Need some enlightenment. They started a Spanish newsletter that had many common problems and the steps necessary to solve them.
  o However, some cannot read their own native language.

Possible Action:
- We as a collective Mexican community from East Moline had a meeting with the police captain and the police officers who patrolled our specific area. The meeting served as a tutorial that included topics of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors.
- Good forum for the police to learn about the refugees’ cultures and discuss ways of working with them instead of continuing to alienate them with their current approach. Good opportunity to teach one another to be more culturally aware of one another’s differences.

Wrap-Up
- Next week we are going to be looking at what actions and steps we can take to solve some of these issues.
- Action Forum: Thursday, May 19th, 6:30-8:30 pm
- We will need a representative from our group to help present our discoveries and possible solutions.

Changing Faces, Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Meeting Summary: Tuesday, May 10, 2011

Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance:

| ( ) Peter Chege | ( ) Lukole Mustafa | ( ) Susan Simbathana | ( ) Nyamurutwa Tantine |
| ( ) Emily Dipole | ( ) Ndayishimiye Esau | ( ) Jason Lopez | ( ) Jean Baptist Twizerumukiz |
| ( ) Michell Ndihiyabandi | (X) Kardonuuru | ( ) Armanda Makula | (X) Esau Minani |
| ( ) Shadrack Nkumira | ( ) Glenda Nicke | ( ) Kabura Marita | ( ) Hector Vasquez |
| ( ) Travis Greenlee | (X) Allin Nyirantore | ( ) Patrick Noya | ( ) Ricardo Morales |
| ( ) Carlos Jimenez | ( ) Leen Kago | ( ) Emmanuel Musinga | ( ) Vysungu Ndwinda |

Others present: Nyiramutatiautwa Chantal

Session 5- Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?

Recap: Four areas that we would like to focus on improving within Rock Island:
1. Education
2. Criminal Justice
3. Employment
4. Housing

Crafting Action Steps Together

1. Acting individually or in small groups, how can we help our community make progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?
   - First of all I choose education because we need more studies for our children, because for us as refugees we cannot do anything else. We need to be taught the laws; we don’t know the rules so we can’t obey them.
   - What we did (speaking on behalf of the Mexican community) was create an action group from East Moline. We invited the police chief and the area patrol officers, parents, etc. to attend this meeting. This was a great opportunity to promote conversation between the law enforcement and our community members.
     o Who initiated the meeting?
       - The community. We went as a group to speak to the police chief.
I looked into this idea and I think it has already been done. However, I think it should be revisited.
- I think that it was done for Jiffy with their employees, but I'm not sure.
- I think it is more powerful coming from our focus/study group.
- What I want to add is the more studies for our children. Kids starting high school need to start at a lower level because they don't even know English.

3. Name the most important ways to increase civic engagement by immigrants/refugees.
   - Patrick Noya spoke about his organization, Quad City Refugees Outreach Programs, Inc.
     - His organization is creating community involvement and fun. They have a calendar that is all planned out with numerous social events.
     - We are working to create this community to help our families—setting good examples.

4. What is the single most important step to improve everyday life in Rock Island for immigrants/refugees? Moving toward an opportunity to help and empower one another.
   - I think creating a location where people can gather, meet, and converse is an important step in creating a strong community.
     - Yes, we are trying to create that kind of environment. We have a projector and screen to show refugees and immigrants movies once or twice a month.
     - We need a group/team effort to clean the building and get it up to speed.
   - I believe these immigrants and refugees are going to have a great impact on the community for years to come.
   - Creating an opportunity for the youth to stay away from drugs.
   - Good for Rock Island to invest in the education—good for years to come.
   - Need to speak to the police so they can understand our culture and we can learn the laws.

MLK Center Summer Day Camp: June 13 – July 29, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. Ages 6-14. Lunch is provided. Go to MLK Center to apply.

What is an action we can take to help the education in Rock Island?
   - Thinking in terms of a newcomers school—I know I'm dreaming, but I'm envisioning a "newcomer's center" where all ages could be helped—
     - English classes, transitional classrooms for children, etc.
     - Many of us have had that same dream and conversations, but it's trying to turn those into a reality.
       - Black Hawk College received a grant from World Relief to provide an English Education program for those that are immigrating to Rock Island now. Black Hawk does the adults ESL, but we need something for the youth. It's finding way to create more opportunities with the same funding.
       - Casa Guanajuato started small and now they have their own building. It takes time.
       - I know it's hard to hear "it takes time" but it really does and things will improve.
       - There are differences between what has been successful in the past and what will work today, but it is worth looking at.
       - Communication is key and there is nothing wrong with forming groups and networking with one another.
       - I am suggesting instead of the newsletters that they conduct town hall meetings to ask the questions that they want answers to. I think that is what we aimed to do with our newsletter.

Who Can Help Make a Difference?
   - What I hear is that there are a lot of organizations who are trying to help, but we don't know what the other is doing. We need to come together to do more and create action. Opportunities for collaboration.
   - We need to get together as groups and work together and talk about what we can do.
   - I have sat in on groups but I have never had immigrants and refugees involved in the planning. It is critical that they are involved for it to be successful.
   - What we are saying is that there should be a way to bring groups together to look for collaboration.
   - Is there a directory of agencies in the QCA for immigrants and refugees?
     - Who is the go to person for this?
     - It is a good idea to have a go-to person within local government.

List of organizations within the QCA:
1. Royal Neighbors
2. Church of Peace
3. Broadway Presbyterian Church
4. Community Caring Conference
5. Quad Cities Refugees Outreach Program, Inc.
6. Youth Service Bureau
7. Augustana College
8. Student United Way
9. Rock Island School District
10. Black Hawk College
11. Trinity Medical

Which Ideas Should We Share at the Action Forum?
Action steps between now and November:
1. Education
   a. Newcomers School
   b. Welcome Center
      i. I think the action step is where we bring different institutions, stake holders, college level, churches, grade schools, K-12 school system, Community College (Black Hawk), Augustana College, refugee/immigrant organizations—bring them together to conduct a feasibility study around the idea of a newcomer's center or school.
   c. Promote and develop afterschool and summer English courses.
2. Criminal Justice/ Police
   a. Organizing town sessions with the refugee/immigrant communities and the police department.
   b. Dialogue between the refugee/immigrant communities and DCFS
3. Employment
   a. Job fair that is targeted for the specific immigrant/refugee communities. Providing translators to assist with both interviewing and filling out applications.
   b. Provide an intensive employment related language education for refugees.
   c. Develop employer education programs on refugee/immigrant culture work place integration.
      i. Coordinate an effort to network both agencies and employers to refugees/immigrants.

4. Housing
   a. When lease is being signed provide a representative that is present to avoid any hidden fees, fines, etc.

For Action Forum:

1. Education: Organize meetings between Refugees/immigrants representatives and agencies, the school district, Blackhawk College and other stakeholders to discuss concerns about education and explore feasibility of a Newcomer School/Center.

2. Criminal Justice/Police: Organizing town hall sessions for dialogue between the refugee/immigrant communities and the police department and DCFS to help the police & DCFS develop fair and culturally-sensitive approaches towards refugees/immigrants.

3. Employment: Organize Job fairs targeted at immigrant/refugee communities and offer Employers workshops to sensitize them about refugee/immigrant cultures and ease their integration in the work place.

4. Housing: Provide an advocate/representative when refugees/immigrants go to sign leases, to help them avoid any hidden fees, fines, or misunderstandings.
Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 1114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present  ( ) Absent
(X) Perry Bentsen
(X) Hagos Berhanne
(X) Subash Bhatrall
(X) Ameatra Carrol
(X) Glen Evans
(X) Carl Fuller
(X) Suchita Gurung
(X) Rosa Guzman
(X) Blaise Iranzi
(X) Gay Ka Paw
(X) William Kirby
(X) Lauren Loftin
(X) Brian McMaster
(X) Andrew Nice
(X) Judy Teeple

What did you learn from this session?
- We are each individuals
- It is not "us" and "them:
- We got to know new people
- To help each other
- We need to help teach new people in our community
- We are more alike than different; we all have needs. It's easier to use labels
- We all have to learn the process
- We need to interact/talk with folks from outside our community
- Through communication, understand others
- Know the view of other immigrants and go for solutions

Why did you want to be a part of this Study Circle dialogue?
- I hear people say there is a problem, and I believe there is an opportunity
- To share ideas
  The faces in this group are an opportunity for Rock Island

Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 1114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present  ( ) Absent
(X) Perry Bentsen
(X) Hagos Berhanne
(X) Subash Bhatrall
(X) Petra Campos
(X) Ameatra Carrol
(X) Glen Evans
(X) Carl Fuller
(X) Suchita Gurung
(X) Rosa Guzman
(X) Citlally Morales Guzman
(X) Blaise Iranzi
(X) Gay Ka Paw
(X) William Kirby
(X) Lauren Loftin
(X) Brian McMaster
(X) Andrew Nice
(X) Judy Teeple

Session 2- Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

Opening
Statement game: do you agree/neutral/disagree with the different statements.

Describe Your America
1. What are/were your expectations about living in the U.S.?
   - More job opportunities
   - Able to get citizenship more easily
   - More educational opportunities
2. Was there a time when you or your family lived better? Has your prosperity improved over the generations?
   - Overall greater opportunity and prosperity
3. Is your family well-being better or worse?
   - Worse: economic decline- costs more to take care of self, less job benefits; uncertainty; difficulty finding work
   - Better: move to the U.S. has helped; dedication and hard labor provides opportunity
4. Describe your American experience.
   - Peaceful
   - Security for future; stability
   - Change can happen without violence
   - America has a very systematic approach to everything.
What Connects Us?

1. What connects us to Rock Island?
   - Schools, jobs, people, study groups, concerts, community events, tragedies, sporting teams, sharing culture, education
   - A sense of belonging

2. What separates us in Rock Island?
   - Religion, ethnicity, language, attitudes, politics (elections), ideas, the "hill" (classes of people), lack of communication

Engaging in America

1. What are our responsibilities for living in the United States?
   - Making a difference to others and the community
   - Leave a legacy
   - Teach others what we know, i.e., culture
   - Make the best out of our abilities

2. Do you know how to engage in civic opportunities?
   - Study groups
   - Community Caring Conference (CCC)
   - Through church and schools
   - Rock Island transparency

3. What will help the transition of immigrants/refugees into Rock Island?
   - Interested people to help
   - More translators
   - More opportunities to learn English
   - More training in jobs, technology, etc.
   - Strength of the community
   - Freedom to fail; give others the opportunity to learn and grow from failing.

Wrap Up

1. What did you learn in this session?
   - Life isn’t simple
   - We are living in a community that is trying to better itself
   - Communication can occur without talking

2. Where do you feel comfortable gathering?
   - School
   - Family reunions
   - Weddings
   - Food is good!

3. Did you learn new ways to participate?
   - Community Caring Conference
   - Using members of the community

   We belong to a whole community, not just my country.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Sunday, May 1, 2011

Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 1114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Perry Benten
(X) Hagos Berhane
(X) Subash Bhattarai
(X) Petra Campos
( ) Ametra Carrol
(X) Glen Evans
(X) Erica Fuller
(X) Suchita Gurung
(X) Rosa Guzman

(X) Citally Morales Guzman
( ) Blaise Iranzi
(X) Gay Ka Paw
(X) William Kirby
(X) Lauren Loftin
(X) Brian McMaster
(X) Drew Nagle
( ) Andrew Nice
(X) Judy Tesple

Session 3 - How is Our Community Changing?

News for Discussion

News 4: It creates problems when people don’t speak English.
- Each of us can help those learning to speak English
- Solutions: more interpreters; hire bi-lingual teachers; teach whole family units together
- When people can’t communicate, the road is hard.
- Most speak English, so learn, but not by force.
- We can all benefit, even if older to share with younger generation
**View 6:** When new immigrants do well, racism gets worse.
- An attitude exists for some people - when Americans are out of work - why do immigrants get jobs?
- The more learning required in union shop, there is less work offered
- Some people will complain if others get work
- Nationalities here for awhile escape scrutiny (Irish, for example)
- Americans forget why immigrants come - because of hardships, religious freedom, opportunities, to escape violence
- Early immigrants (1800's) didn't have same laws as now. More difficult to get here and get citizenship

**View 3:** Social service workers or police are viewed as heavy handed, reporting situations in refugee communities too quickly.
- A problem if need to make decision in crisis; when language is different.
- Reporting abuse if punishment right is given to parents by police due to culture. That can have serious repercussions
- In some cultures, corporal punishment is ok depending on who gives it.
- Immigrants feel uneasy to give punishment to their children; believe children could be taken away
- Behavior standards could be made by those not having children
- There needs to be a balance in how punishment is delivered
- There are questions if too much time is spent with refugees on their issues (language, discipline)
- City needs to hire different ethnics in all various occupations
- Police need more training in diversity; also other occupations needs this as well
- When we get to know others, there is more understanding.
- Majority of teachers are white, need more diversity
- Many barriers to those living here.

**View 1:** Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.
- With many more languages spoken in the school district, it creates a harder job for educators
- We can learn another language here in America; we can also share cultures in schools.
- Having someone in class with a different language is difficult for teachers
- Challenge in ELL for available time; need more programs; need after school language program for families
- Need a rapid ELL for small children as they learn faster
- It is difficult to make every child the same within their age
- More interpreters needed in school and for teachers and parents
- If you need an interpreter, then need it for understanding.

- There are those in our city who do not know about the explosion of growth in immigrants and refugees
- Immigrants come here for enlightenment, communication, and life and death situations in their country.

**Wrap-Up**

What did you learn from this meeting?
- Need for getting information out and understanding information
- Need to get to know one another and have opportunities to meet other people
- It's a two-way street; immigrants learn English but Americans need to learn about other cultures
- People need to get involved
- People like sharing of their culture
- Deal more with the language problem

Name three or four of the most important benefits of new immigrants coming to the community.
- The world comes to Rock Island; no need to go to another country to gain an understanding.
- Understanding another culture
- As Americans, we can learn of the great need around the world, right here in R.I.
- Learn other foods, other celebrations

What are the three or four biggest concerns we face in our community around immigration, race, language, schools, and employment?
- Police/social workers
  - Different cultures handle crisis and family situations differently.
  - There could be serious implications if misunderstandings occur.
  - Police need more training in diversity - they are a cross-section of the thoughts/opinions of the majority culture.
- Education
  - The more we can educate and advance immigrants in our workforce, the better we will be.
  - Standards are often made by those who don't have children.
  - Bilingual educators are needed to assist immigrants.
    - Not enough interpreters.
  - Adults are not learning as fast as children; adults are isolated at their jobs and homes.
  - Need family ELL programs.
  - Some in R.I. don't know how many immigrants live here or the expansion of their growth.
- Language in school
  - Puts stress on educators - less time to complete assignments.
- Employment
  - Some people complain when others get work and they do not (union work).
  - Nationalities here for some time escape scrutiny as compared to recent immigrants (Irish, for example).
  - Americans forget why immigrants come to this country - religious freedom, escape violence, jobs, and opportunities.
Measuring the Impact of Immigrants in Rock Island

Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 1114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Meeting Summary: Sunday, May 6, 2013

Attendance:
(X) Present    ( ) Absent
(X) Perry Bentsen  (X) Citaly Morales Guzman
(X) Hagos Berhane (X) Marina Huerta
( ) Subash Bhattai (X) Blaise Ibarra
(X) Petra Campos (X) Gay Ka Paw
(X) Ametra Carrol (X) William Kirby
( ) Glen Evans ( ) Lauren Loftin
(X) Erica Fuller (X) Brian McMaster
(X) Suchita Gurung (X) Drew Nagle
(X) Rosa Guzman (X) Andrew Nice
(X) Judy Teeple

Session 4: What Should We Do About Immigration and Community Change in Rock Island?

Community Impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>In Rock Island, every child receives a quality education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Rock Island's health care system serves the needs of all our residents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing in Rock Island is affordable, clean and safe for all residents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, neighborhoods, etc.) reflect the diversity of our population</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Local media offer fair and full coverage about immigrants and refugees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>All neighborhoods in Rock Island have access to public services (such as refuse, recycling, road maintenance, transit, police and fire protection, etc.)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has equal access to clothing, food and everyday items.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>The social services system in Rock Island (such as job training, immigrant/refugee services, child welfare, etc.) meets everyone's needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criminal Justice:
- Institution vs. individuals – policing problem
- More problems with individuals rather than institutions

Education:
- Students have the opportunity to learn, but rarely are the ‘receiving’ and understanding the material
- Need more minority teachers/professors – can relate better with students
- Administration is blamed – Story of a junior student that just before taking standard exam was moved to sophomore status.
- Teachers move forward with curriculum without students understanding material, so no ‘real’ learning is taking place.
- No Child Left Behind program negatively affects school system
- Parent involvement is needed for student success.
- In school, but also at home
- Language is a major barrier

Employment:
- More job training opportunities are needed

Housing:
- In smaller communities, housing is much more affordable
- In Rock Island, housing is getting better/cleaner/safer

Leadership:
- Most discrepancy compared with other categories
- Community leaders don’t respond well with regards to diversifying local population
- It is understood that this process is uniform and difficult to change quickly

Media:
- Not many participants follow the media too closely
- Noted recent positive coverage in the papers of refugees and support programs

Public Services:
- The operating hours of the local busing service could be improved to accommodate the night shift

Shopping:
- Shopping, overall, has improved significantly in the current years – there is no longer a need to drive to Joliet or Chicago to find authentic food

Social Services:
- More opportunity for job training

Approaches to Change
Why are some categories (public services, health care, etc.) higher than others?
- Public services have established procedures over the years that haven’t changed – trial and error overtime develops these programs
- In order to change leadership, we need to focus our attention on education

Wrap-Up
What approaches are missing or could be changed for the betterment of the community?
- Develop and solidify education for youth
- Gathering of a diverse group of persons regularly to talk about issues – continuation of Changing Faces

What changes in city, school and other institutional policies do we need to deal with large numbers of new immigrants/refugees?
- Emphasize the importance of diversity reflection
- More opportunity for job training
- Set up ESL program for one year to educate and emerge immigrants/refugees with language

What changes in social services do we need to deal with large numbers of new immigrants?
- Public transportation at late shift for work
- Certification process made easier/faster (professors, engineers, etc.)
- Diversifying job training opportunities
- Have a cultural recognition day on July 4th (Labor Day Parade?)

What can we do now?
- Talk about Changing Faces! Spread the word.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Meeting Summary: Sunday, May 15, 2011

Location: CCC at Church of Peace, 1114 12th Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent
(X) Perry Bentsen  (X) Citlaly Morales Guzman
(X) Hagos Berhane  (X) Marina Huerta
(X) Subhash Bhatraii  (X) Blaise Iranzi
(X) Petra Campos  (X) Gay Ka Paw
(X) Ameta Carrol  ( ) William Kirby
( ) Glen Evans  ( ) Lauren Loflin
( ) Erica Fuller  (X) Brian McMaster
(X) Suchita Gurung  (X) Drew Nagle
(X) Rosa Guzman  (X) Andrew Nice
( ) Judy Teeple

Session 5: Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?
Where do we want action to start in our community?
- Have one-year program to learn language and culture – have an extended time as needed to learn language and get settled without the pressure of work for survival and then no time to learn (for many 90 days is not enough)
- Refugees
  o Department designated and well-connected across country
  o Major center or building for refugees to learn and share ideas and what is available to do in the community, i.e. activities, socializing, etc.
    • used to better understand community, a sort of street knowledge
- Easier transition/way to obtain visas and passports
- Increase cultural awareness
  o Police force
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fridays</th>
<th>Tuesdays</th>
<th>Sundays</th>
<th>Tuesdays</th>
<th>Sundays</th>
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<th>Tuesdays</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RI Township</td>
<td>1st Baptist</td>
<td>St. John's</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Broadway</td>
<td>Broadway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Professors/teachers/city workers/students
  - Acknowledgement of other cultures
    - July 4th Parade
    - Musical or dancing line-up representing different cultures
  - Concerns for language
    - Opinions should not be incorporated in text, translation error confuses people
    - Language can be a connection with others
      - English speaker talking w/ Spanish speaker, both not fluent, but both learning from one another, make more of a two way street not put burden solely on immigrants to learn American English
    - Using college students to help teach/translate various languages in elementary/high schools, increase language teaching in our schools
    - Identify potential translators and help them get connected with those firms and entities providing translators

How to help others not fall through the cracks?
- Take initiative of native citizens to help immigrants/refugee's acclimate to new society
- It's not what is known that is the problem, it is what is unknown. Immigrants/Refugee's have a difficult time knowing how to act or what to do

What are some ways to increase civic engagement of immigrants/refugee's?
- Center place of meeting (building)
  - Parents in college, children in school. There are different types of learning and this creates a disconnect b/w parents and children.
  - Immigrants/Refugee's will be able to see others in their community and be able to identify with them and communicate with ways to be engaged in the community

What is the single most important step to improve community?
- Bring people together to learn about this community
- Police Force
  - Develop a program or literature outlining rules: good/bad things to do, learn 'street smarts,' etc.
  - Engagement with police and immigrants/refugee's by way of meetings
- Increase mass Transit especially to include late-shift
- Develop a Fast Track for certification for those refugees and immigrants who were professionally certified in another country
- Connecting organizations with similar roles to work collaboratively
  - Unify community
  - Open Door Agency was mentioned as an example, model

Wrap-Up
Though we did not have a formal time – these thoughts were shared through the evening
- This was such a good experience, the city should sponsor more study circles in the future
- Our group made good connections – let's have a reunion of this group with food sharing
- Our group made good connections with each other – several instances of advocacy and help provided from some in the group to others in the group.
- Enjoyed the food sharing
- Enjoyed even more getting to know each other
- Saw the Study Circles as a good foundation for change in Rock Island
- Filled out Participant Questionnaire

Action Plans – to be presented by Blaise Iranzi and Perry Bentsen

1. Goal: To provide one stop service for information and support and to build community
   **Develop a Center for Refugee's/Immigrants**
   - Sharing of culture both within their own heritage and across heritages
   - Learn 'street smarts'
   - Knowledge of services in community

2. Goal: To increase awareness and celebration of the diverse cultures in Rock Island
   **Cultural Education and celebration**
   - Event showcasing different cultures incorporated into an existing event
   - Gathering of a diverse group of individuals to demonstrate cultural heritage
   - Cultural and Diversity training/enrichment for police, city workers, school teachers
   - Sharing circles of new refugees/immigrant's, with longtime residents (immigrants and non-immigrants)
Meeting Summary: Friday, April 15, 2011

Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent
(X) Lisa Bisom
(X) Vikki Blair
(X) Becky Buckrop
(X) Isaac Carr
(X) Jeff Condit
( ) Joseph Haberisoni
(X) Steve Maginas
(X) David McAdams
(X) Juanita McAdams
(X) Gena McCullough
(X) Chuck Oestreich
( ) April Peska
(X) Amy Rowell
(X) Michele Sharp
(X) Alicia Shuman
(X) Emma Tucek

- Head Start programs are stepping stones for progress
- The key is to meet in a community to discuss problems, such as those in Liberia
- You can never integrate if you stay separate
- There is a German-American Center in Davenport
  - Separation vs. integration: it can work but you need to reach out to the community instead of staying isolated
- Helping refugees succeed:
  - Eliminate ignorance: information sharing, statistics; awareness eliminates assumptions and stereotypes
  - Organization for the purpose of integration not isolation
  - Activities such as 4H would be beneficial to immigrants, but they aren’t taking advantage of these programs (language and transportation barrier)
  - Historically, the role of the church has been information sharing.
  - Refugees are not necessarily in churches so information spreading is the key
  - Information communication is ineffective: flyers are $60 each needed in several different languages
- Too much information causes stereotypes and labeling
- Other problems include multiple groups from one culture grouped by nation alone (12 different refugee groups of Burmese)
- Different languages and dialects
- Often the second generation learns English
- Too high expectations for the first generation
- Rock Island should not be separated into the “Chinatowns” and “Greektowns” of Chicago
- Representatives of ethnically centered groups, not geographically located neighborhoods, meet to make one large group (Neighborhood Partners, community gardens)
- What are neighborhoods: school based
- Schools, churches, and the Government cannot solve problems individually; they should work together to achieve goals

Meeting Summary: Friday, April 22, 2011

Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent
( ) Lisa Bisom
( ) Vikki Blair
( ) Becky Buckrop
( ) Isaac Carr
( ) Jeff Condit
( ) Joseph Haberisoni
( ) Steve Maginas
( ) David McAdams
( ) Juanita McAdams
( ) Gena McCullough
( ) Chuck Oestreich
( ) April Peska
( ) Amy Rowell
( ) Michele Sharp
( ) Alicia Shuman
( ) Emma Tucek

Others present: Peter Kivisto (substitute note taker)

Session 2: Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

What are Rock Island and the United States like? What are its core values and what does it have to offer newcomers?
- Free, safe, able to advance and contribute
- Education opportunities
- Civility among neighbors
- Greater appreciation and embracing of diversity today compared to the past
- We’ve moved away from seeing the country as a melting pot, where groups lose their distinctive identities, to a salad, in which the components remain distinct but the whole works harmoniously.
Is the United States the beacon that it was in the past?
- The U.S. is a beacon, though its brightness has dimmed
- Is Europe viewed as more attractive destinations for some immigrants/refugees, particularly Muslims?
- Newcomers view the country as rich in resources

Why do newcomers end up in Rock Island?
- Rural vs. urban
- Region of the country
- Ethnic enclaves
- Mixed neighborhoods
- Immigrants can pick where they end up and refugees cannot; they are placed in various locales by agencies working to assist their settlement.
- Some newcomers prefer smaller cities since they’re seen as easier places to get a foothold. Also, less dangerous (lower crime rates, etc.)
- Importance of extended families; immigrants and refugees have networks throughout the country.

How/when do newcomers become leaders in their new homeland?
- Some establish/run community gardens
  - An opportunity to utilize their leadership skills.
- Some individuals are leaders within their community, but are not recognized in the larger society.
- There are good examples of community activists who are succeeding in bridging the gap between refugees and longtime residents.
- How can we nurture more activists?

What do newcomers need to do to integrate/incorporate into the larger community?
- Important for larger community to reach out; more focus should be placed on what the receiving society should do.
  - Newsletter spotlighting events within immigrant communities
  - Creating sponsors or “big brothers and sisters”
  - Promoting a role for religious organizations
  - Creating neighborhood picnics/street or block parties
  - Established residents attending refugee organizations’ regular meetings
  - Established residents need to invite newcomers in if integration is to really occur.
  - Many immigrants see things about American society that are troubling, such as a lack of respect by young people. As a result, many attempt to keep homeland values in the home while embracing American values outside of it.
  - Certain trends in the larger society are troubling, such as the “in your face” attitude that is all-too evident.
  - Rock Island’s reputation in the QC
    - Refugees and immigrants might play a valuable role in redefining the sense of what the community is like.

Wrap-Up
- Different immigrants and refugees have different experiences, based on a lot of factors
- Integration is difficult for the first generation; it’s with the second generation that major changes occur
- It's not “what are they going to do” so much as “what are we going to do”
- Immigrants and refugees can be a boon to Rock Island
- It might be a good idea to explore finding ways to rehab empty houses for newcomers
- Doing so would create jobs
- Rock Island is more open-minded than the rest of the QC; a more hospitable place
- Create a public information calendar that lists when various immigrant and refugee groups hold regular meetings

**Changing Faces, Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary: Friday, April 29, 2016**

**Location:** Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(X) Present</th>
<th>( ) Absent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(X) Lisa Bisom</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Session 3: How is Our Community Changing?**

**Views for Discussion**

View 1: Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries
- It is difficult for teachers with the No Child Left Behind program to have children who do not speak English.
- With state tests there is pressure on teachers to make scores. Teachers know that the child won’t pass, and they don’t expect them to, but they lose funding if scores aren’t high enough.
- Children can be targeted for bullying if they don’t have the knowledge at their grade level.
- Should standards be adjusted for refugees?
  - No Child Left Behind is good in an ideal world but children are not one size fits all. It includes refugees and American children
Is the United States the beacon that it was in the past?
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**Changing Faces, Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary:** Friday, April 29, 2013

**Location:**  Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance:**
- (X) Lisa Bisom
- (X) Vikki Blair
- (X) Becky Buckrop
- (X) Isaac Carr
- (X) Jeff Condit
- ( ) Joseph Haberisoni
- ( ) Steve Maginas
- ( ) David McAdams
- ( ) Juanita McAdams
- (X) Gena McCullough
- (X) Chuck Oestreich
- (X) April Peeka
- (X) Amy Rowell
- (X) Michele Sharp
- (X) Alicia Shuman
- (X) Emma Tucek

**Session 3: How is Our Community Changing?**

**Views for Discussion**

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- With state tests there is pressure on teachers to make scores. Teachers know that the child won’t pass, and they don’t expect them to, but they lose funding if scores aren’t high enough.
- Children can be targeted for bullying if they don’t have the knowledge at their grade level.
- Should standards be adjusted for refugees?
  - No Child Left Behind is good in an ideal world but children are not one size fits all. It includes refugees and American children
- Another problem is that refugee parents just sign any papers their children bring home knowing only they need a signature, but they cannot read what the information says.
  o Communication issues between schools and parents
  o Teachers try not to rely on children to translate to parents notes that they send home.

- In one school of about 360, they have gone from a couple refugee children to 30-34 children. Also there are 16 different languages spoken which adds to struggles. Children aren’t from one place and can be handled as a group, they come from everywhere.

- There is a federal movement to teach immigrant/refugee children in their native language because they are struggling to learn concepts such as math in languages that are not their native language. There is a gap in learning between learning concepts and a new language.

- After school, kids are left on their own after 3pm. There may be after school activities but there’s a point when the school system is finished and they are not around the system of the school.
  o A potential solution could be to make the school a “culture center” after hours
    - Some programs are serving that purpose like Lights on for Learning.
    - Struggle between making programs school vs. community based

- Immigrants/refugees do not want to sit around and talk, they want action.

- Idea: charter school for kids- can learn English and aren’t “stuffed” into mainstream public schools
  o It would acclimate children
  o There are places like this already offering children these facilities in cities such as Chicago and Atlanta
  o A lot of this funding is private but decisions always come down to money
  o Would people be willing to raise taxes for this? School already lack funding
  o Frame the situation: test scores lack and therefore funding lacks because the children aren’t being offered adequate resources to succeed (which would be found in a charter school). By raising taxes for this purpose, the money would be put back into the school to pay through eventual higher test scores
  o About three years ago a large tax referendum passed because it was sold right and people saw the benefit
  o Questioned if it would be criticized for segregation but to dispel a negative connotation, it would be optional resource.

View 4: It creates problems when people don’t speak English
- Recent incident- a member of her staff had to go to court with a Burmese woman who had received three traffic tickets upon failing to show her driver’s license and registration. She had been given the additional tickets for not knowing English.
  o This brought up questioning how she got her license without knowing English because of the written component of the driving test.
    - Most immigrants get their license and memorize the answers to the written portion.

View 3: Social service workers or police are viewed as heavy handed, reporting situations in refugee communities too quickly.
- It is true: in some countries it is okay to hit children. One participant commented how in her work with immigrants, they make sure that they know that it is not okay in America. They let them know differences like this right away to avoid problems. This is one area that they have to be heavy handed.

- It is hard for immigrants to go from no law to all the laws that America has
  o Children can call 911 here right away if they have a problem with their parents. There isn’t the same level of respect for parents in America
  o Do refugees resent the Americanization of their families?

View 2: We have stopped trying to keep our common culture
- Children are still taught the fundamentals such as the Pledge
- Christian Burmese children sit in the back of the classroom in their home country and they are actually flourishing here in America
- You have to have a common way of teaching kids from so many different origins. Her answer was the commonality of language.
  o Someone threw out the word standardization which sparked others to say that there needed to be individualized learning. There are a lot of benefits of individualized education. Also programs in preschools require teachers to create individual programs
- Churches cannot “go up the chain,” they can only go down. The church is a spoke but it needs a higher level to reach to all the other “spokes” that are reaching towards the middle.
- How to let Rock Island know about these issues in immigration? About ten or twelve people in a congregation of over 300 know about the church’s involvement in immigration issues and programs. It might help for immigrants and refugees themselves telling their stories (as seen once in a newspaper)
  o These stories are in the newspaper but they still don’t get out the information. People skip by stories.
  o Out of sight, out of mind

- ELL programs- it is a barrier if people don’t know the language.
  o It’s not just English, but there is high illiteracy in native languages
  o The government promises eight months of assistance to receive benefits they need to take classes to learn English
  o People turn to churches with long wait lists to get into classes at Blackhawk
  o With jobs that immigrants get there is no incentive to learn English. It’s not necessary.
  o People have to learn. It becomes easier with the second generation

- African Americans mostly take advantage of programs at the Martin Luther King Center. It might be beneficial to include refugees but so far, no one/very few, have signed up for programs
- Also, welcoming new families has been lost in the neighborhood. People keep to themselves.

View 6: When immigrants do well, racism gets worse.
- TV influences people
- Young generations are more accepting
- It’s not appropriate to talk about policies in mixed company and people tend to hang out in their own circle
- It’s hard to branch out
- Top of the hill vs. bottom of the hill
Session 4 - What Should We Do About Immigration and Community Change in Rock Island?

**Community Impressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>In Rock Island, every child receives a quality education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Rock Island’s health care system serves the needs of all our residents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing in Rock Island is affordable, available, clean and safe for all residents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, neighborhoods, etc.) reflect the diversity of our population</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Local media offer fair and full coverage about immigrants and refugees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>All neighborhoods in Rock Island have access to public services (such as refuse, recycling, road maintenance, transit, police and fire protection, etc.)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has equal access to clothing, food and everyday items</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>The social services system in Rock Island (such as job training, immigrant/refugee services, child welfare, etc.) meets everyone’s needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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**Approaches to Change**

**Housing:**
- The family services housing office didn’t provide rent receipts or paper work that are standard.
- Asked to sign rent renewals way before their current contract was up.
- There should be training for public housing workers. It was noticed that some maintenance workers were disrespectful.
- Rental property owners need education. Families can tell managers about problems yet they don’t get fixed for up to half a year.
- The safety and cleanliness was questionable but may have just been a media perception. Sunset Heights was recently remodeled.
- Language, rules and regulations are issues in public housing. The rules should be better to refugees, but language is a major barrier. It is hard to describe the rules.
  - Not all families go through World Relief and some other agencies don’t do as good of a job at giving refugees direction. It is a hectic time coming right off the airplane and refugees do not remember all the aspects of maintaining their house or apartment.
  - Using appliances is new to most refugees.
  - While there are booklets with pictures informing how to use appliances, there should be more action to use them as a major reference.
- Rental Housing Inspection programs considered eliminating funding and therefore, the only person who can go into private houses to inspect. However, he is still there.

**Leadership:**
- The problem with leadership is that some people are only interested in the money.
  - The real change will come with a grassroots movement who are involved with the actual community.
  - Immigrants and refugees could be leaders of organizations such as Neighborhood Partners.
- Calls to refuse and immigrant programs are mostly made during election times telling them merely to vote for their candidates rather than going out into communities and reaching out.
  - The Chief of Police went around and met with people, which is what immigrants and refugees need.
Leaders can be found within the immigrant and refugee youth. Change is not going to happen with the first generation. However, if they have the opportunity they leave. It depends on the immigrant group. Some value education in different ways. For example, in the Liberian community, school is not mandatory and is on an individual basis.

Achieve Quad Cities offers programs where volunteers mentor junior high students.

Young Professionals Network is offered to keep youth in the QCA but it is not diverse and it is too business-oriented.

Criminal Justice:

- There are language barriers even with Spanish speaking interpreters.
  - Going back to the woman who received three tickets for failure to present her license and registration due to language complications and the idea of pictures to represent how to use appliances: police could have pictures showing what they are looking for.
  - Rock Island police department has reached out to get a list of interpreters when they need it.
  - Some people don't believe in calling the police on their neighbors or people they know, but they need to learn how to use the law to solve their problems. For example, in Liberia there is a village chief to interact with the community and when a problem arises, the chief consults the head of the family, not the people involved directly with the problem.
  - One problem is that courts have to provide interpreters but they have to be from outside of the community, which is a challenge to find. It is important though because with their status and the severity of the crime they risk being deported.
  - Training for immigrants and refugees about common laws is important, for they vary in different places. Immigrants and refugees should be informed of common laws and customs in the U.S. regarding marriage, drugs, and other customs.

Shopping:

- Transportation: the bus system is confusing and takes forever.
  - A shuttle from housing to stores would be a viable option.
  - Carpooling is an option.
- Access: food stores are far away and shops are at the top of the hill
- Affordability: Hy-vee is good about stocking what customers want, but it is expensive and resettlement groups don't take refugees to shop there; Orientations are at Aldi and Walmart.

Employment:

- Is there training for immigrants and refugees to start a business?
- The City of Rock Island provides business information classes.
- Immigrants and refugees must learn how to live here first. They are in survival mode for the first two years.
- It is tough to get grants for refugees and immigrants.
- Struggle to get United Way funds
- Grassroots organizations provide funds post-World Relief

Welcome center orientations are important to provide immigrants and refugees with the steps and where to go for what aid and what agencies provide what services. There could be one agency where all the agencies meet: community mapping and representation.

Healthcare:

- There are access issues and waiting lists
- There is particular concern about mental health. Programs are available, but they are culturally irrelevant; they cater to the American culture.
  - It is important because especially in the Rock Island community, there have been two refugee suicides in recent months.
  - Family Resources provides decent, free counseling and the clients were pleased
  - Shortage of Quad City psychiatrists: there are no private firms who take medical cards.
  - Skype: people trained in cultural mental health could be located in a bigger city and still reach smaller areas
  - Separated families creates emotional roller coasters for refugees and immigrants
  - Alcohol problems
  - Medical cards don't provide for hearing aids.

Challenges Faced by Refugees in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Friday, May 13, 2019

Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance:

(X) Present  ( ) Absent

( ) Lisa Bleom
(X) Vikki Blair
(X) Becky Buckrop
(X) Isaac Carr
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(X) Emma Tucek

Session 5- Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?

- Rotary clubs or Kiwanis could involve immigrants and refugees
  - Good Option because they are having a hard time getting new members
  - It is expensive though
  - They could be Honorary Members

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One participant read a book entitled "Arrival City" which Rock Island should strive to become. It is based on the fact that migration from farming to urban areas is good. Big farms should take up the subsistence farming and will make it productive. Subsistence farmers are good at farming, but are working with poor land conditions. Instead of treating immigrants like problems, they should be regarded as proactive opportunities. Neither should they be regarded as second class citizens. Consequently, Rock Island is in need of preparedness in becoming accepting of new arrivals.

More Computer labs
- Problems learning how to use them or getting access to them
- They need to be more welcoming in places such as libraries

Volunteer community group to help immigrants and refugees into full American Citizenship
- With subgroups including jobs, housing, culture, citizenship, healthcare, etc.
- Grants, fundraising, events and programming could be another subgroup of the group

Use top government officials such as the mayor to invite the community together with a particular emphasis and message on the importance of working together.

Community fairs with food and games: these events exist and are somewhat successful

Which is the best structure for sustainability: volunteers or government?

Hispanic Chambers already exist and may help

There used to be funding for Information and Referral where they would know where to go for various services. They also kept track of who was getting what from which services as to not take more than is fair. That program is no longer available.
- There needs to be an umbrella structure to coordinate services. Perhaps a booklet or directory
- Neighborhood Partners is a tangible task force for change

- More universal symbols, (ex. Bathroom signs) are there enough of these? It is on an individual basis what people need. There should be a survey of what people need rather than making assumptions.
- Differences in American culture include how cultures deal with traumatic events. For example, in the Liberian community, they come together and decide what needs to be done and who can do what opposed to in America, problems are taken care of directly within the family.
- Strategy should be to reach out from the existing community to the new community because they are segregated right now. Figureheads such as the mayor could encourage this.
- Mental Health- could be a subcategory of the volunteer group as previously mentioned. The stigma of mental health should be removed and should be separated from physical health

Action Steps to Present

1. Continue Changing Faces group to centralize activity
   - Use current Chambers for contacts in each area- volunteers, churches, government agencies, education
   - Mayor or other notables to invite immigrants
   - City or grant assistance
2. Rock Island Refugee health initiative
   - To improve mental health counseling
   - Dental, nutrition, other wellness
Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present     ( ) Absent
(X) Ethel Bassett
(X) Mary Grace Boland
(X) Ethelene Boyd
(X) Gail Brooks
(X) Sherry Ervin
(X) Gwen Foulkes
(X) Julie Gray
(X) Colleen Guydon
(X) Ed Hanna

(X) Geraldine Lowery
(X) Jack Knep
(X) Mary Knepp
(X) Vitalis Kyulule
(X) Mary Lambrecht
(X) Patrick Noya
(X) Barbara Robinson
( ) Jenny Salisbury
( ) Esti Young

Others present: Besheyeyeu Philips

Introductions

Attendance for 12th
- Many group members are involved in the education system or with churches
- Feel safe in America
- Knowing English is the hardest thing since it means no social interaction

Scenarios for Discussion

Scenario 4: A legal U.S. resident does not know what to do when her boss refuse to pay her because she is not sure of her rights.
- Not knowing their rights is a serious issue that immigrants face when they come here.
- They don’t know what questions to ask

Scenario 7: A neighbor finds out that the family next door uses red pepper and whips their children to discipline them.
- Immigrants do not always know about American customs or culture and they accidently break them.
- Immigrants need education, not punishment, for breaking laws and rules they did not even know about.
- Need to explain rights step-by-step

Scenario 1: After members of an immigrant/refugee family start working at Tyson’s, their subsidized housing rent is hiked to $800 per month while an American family pays only $50 for the same apartment.
- A participant was having trouble communicating with the landlord, so they brought in an interpreter to negotiate.
- Rock Island Housing Authority experienced a period of conflicts between African Americans and African immigrants. Many cultural and language issues, as well as violence. RIHA brought the groups together to talk about the issues. They had a potluck and started a garden together, which helped bring the groups together.

- People need to understand past history to understand present attitudes.
- The immigrant’s climb is much harder for them and they need a school to learn rights and to keep their spirits up.
- Immigrants often do not have transportation or know how to get around.
- How can we help the immigrants if they community doesn’t care for them?
- Each family of immigrants is given a $10,000 "traveler’s loan." With no job and no English, how can they ever pay that back easily?
- There’s a long waiting list to get into an ELL class and it’s hard for a community to teach all the immigrants that come to the U.S. Pick up on meanings and understand each other a little bit through body language.
- With schooling, parents often feel sad that they can’t help their kids with homework or getting them to school. The kids have to walk far to school, in any kind of weather.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Tuesday, April 19, 2011

Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present     ( ) Absent
(X) Ethel Bassett
(X) Mary Grace Boland
(X) Ethelene Boyd
(X) Gail Brooks
( ) Sherry Ervin
(X) Gwen Foulkes
(X) Julie Gray
(X) Colleen Guydon
(X) Ed Hanna
(X) Mary Knepp
( ) Vitalis Kyulule
Session 2: Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

Describe Your America


- Grew up on a farm. Her father saved money and her mother said he was a cheap skate. She asked her father once, “Why do black people have such a hard time?” and he replied, “the human race has a hard time.” People just need to love each other.
- We are a county of immigrants.
- Wanted to follow the American dream.
- Participant brought a photo collage of her experiences with President Barack Obama. She worked closely with him.
- There is a difference between being poor and being poor.
  - Great grandfather was born into slavery. Freedom isn’t always free.
  - Second generation Hungarian from Northern Wisconsin. One relative walked from Ashland, WI to Milwaukee, WI to get a job.
  - Raised in Detroit. People should be judged by the content of their character not the color of their skin.
  - From a large family from Kentucky- very poor.
  - Some of the great things about being an American are the chances to become educated, practice your faith freely, disagree with others and travel.
  - Speaker at the Rock Island Academy said, “We are a nation of immigrants who oppress immigrants.”
  - Grew up in Kansas-didn’t realize she was poor growing up.
  - First person in his family to go to college. Standard of living peaked with his parents. He’s been homeless or couch surfing before. Due to federal cuts, may be jobless again in July; unsure of where to go from here- in a place of uncertainty

What Connects Us?

Where do you feel part of the community? What brings us together in Rock Island? What separates us?

- Positive view of Quad Cities, particularly Moline and Rock Island. She taught classes at Blackhawk.
  - She is impressed that RI is taking this on.
  - There is no need for the fear that outsiders associate with Rock Island. It isn’t as dangerous as people make it out to be.
- Churches are segregated institutions.
- Considers herself a Quad Cities person; commuter student at Augustana College.
- Very new to this area. It does not make sense to live in a place and not contribute.
- Lives in Davenport, guest teacher at the Rock Island schools- she is a Quad Cities person.
- The churches of Mt. Zion and Truth Temple work together a lot.
- Poverty is more of a separating factor than race.
- Some of the participants spoke about being proud to be African American.
- We are far more divided racially by class. We do still see ourselves according to race.
  - Children’s generation put less emphasis on race. They may not be able to achieve her standard of living.
- Proud of Mayor Pauley. He said, “I was one of your 14.” Referring to the low voter turnout in the recent election.
- Rock Island has a certain “just get it done” attitude.
- Works in Rock Island but doesn’t live here. She was told “Stay out of Rock Island, it is the slum of the Quad Cities” by a realtor.
  - Rock Island is more progressive.
- We are divided by bridges and joined by a river.
- Guinness Book of World Records competition at Augustana.
- A flood would affect the families in the West End of Rock Island.

Engaging in America

What does it mean to live in the United States, to be an American? What will help immigrants/refugees transition into Rock Island?

- Walking your talk. Doing your part.
- As great a nation, we have weaknesses. We need to enhance the quality of life for others.
- Concept of being your brother and sister’s keeper.
- Strongly believes in American democracy, opportunity, equality, and upward mobility.
- We must celebrate being a multicultural place. It is not about not seeing differences. We should recognize differences but not discriminate because of those things. We cannot forget where we came from. We should not be ethnocentric.
- We can protest and speak our minds. Now, we can do that online too.
- We should make a clearinghouse for services. We should map out a continuum of care.
  - HUD model that we could print and distribute
- This is the land of opportunity. With great reward comes great responsibility.
- We need to start with the children, one person at a time.
- We should reach out to the people in Davenport who have already established a similar program.
- We need to get a huge volunteer force together. Churches should step forward with trust and kindness.
- Book published by United Way that describes a variety of services available to community members- could be helpful for immigrants.
- Immigrants have hope for the future of their children. In an ideal world, we would envision a unified source. It is not fair to ridicule someone for not learning the language.
- A PowerPoint about immigrants that could be used to spread the word at various churches and organizations.
- Refugees need survival English.
- Some refugees don’t know where to start. They have trouble shopping at grocery stores.
- Ideally, service providers should meet together and there would be a nonprofit clearinghouse for immigrant services.
- World Relief has a lot of work. Amy (director) has had to go beyond her regularly scheduled duties a lot. There were 2 deaths and a rape in the community recently.
- We should look to other communities particularly an organization called Immigrant Social Services Inc.

**Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary: Tuesday, April 26, 2013**

**Location:** Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance:**

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<td>Ethel Bassett</td>
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<td>Mary Grace Boland</td>
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Others present: Geraldine, Basheyau Philips

**Session 3: How is Our Community Changing?**

**Views for Discussion**

**Views 5:** New cultures make our community better.
- "This idea is close to how I feel. I believe new cultures make our community better. The makeup of our country was a melting pot. As we learn and interact we enhance the American culture."
- "We have Greek feast, Belgian Center, St. Patrick’s Day Parade etc. We are together but we are mixed."

**View 2:** We have stopped trying to keep our common culture.
- "What group hasn’t brought something to this country?"
- "In history, immigrants didn’t try to not learn English, they had to be successful and have a job. I don’t want to be color blind and fail to see who they are but how can we communicate and connect if they don’t know English though?"

**View 4:** It creates problems when people don’t speak English.
- "But it does make sense. They are repulsive and it does create problems to have such an opinion but it’s really hard for immigrants to learn a new language."
- "I think the things that make this country great should still be taught and learned by everyone"
- "A lot of immigrants know US history and want to function in society by learning English"
- "What if they could function in society without learning English? Or what if they just didn’t bother anyone? Why should we care?"

**View 1:** Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.
- "Don’t agree with it, most kids learn English quite well. I also feel immigrants know the importance of English."
- "In the refugee camps, there are usually no schools and when they come to the US they put you in school by your age and not your ability. This causes them to struggle a lot. These kids also don’t feel free to express themselves because they are made fun of."
- "Schools need a lot more help. Maybe a whole different system with different classes for refugee students."
- "There are a group of immigrants in Iowa who are from Central America and talked about how when they come into their house it is like being in their own culture. But when they go to schools or elsewhere, it is like being in an American culture. Positives would be that they get a different perspectives and new viewpoints. But negative because they don’t really fit in."
- "In 9th grade, things in the school systems change. They go to credit systems with hours and grades."
- "I know of some people who were in the 10th grade and the school moved them to the 12th to avoid the “no child left behind tests” and then they moved them back to the 10th grade."
- "School systems in Liberia are based on your abilities, so where you start isn’t based on your age."

**View 2:** We have stopped trying to keep our common culture.
- "Some people may feel this way since they don’t realize the US has always been a place of immigrants and even without immigrants our culture would be changing."
- "It’s not like it’s just immigrants who don’t know history; look at Jay Leno’s Jay Walk."
- "How do you talk to people who have these views? Just try to explain to them about our history. You may not change anyone’s mind. Some people are just not bothered by actual facts."

**View 7:** If this is the Land of the Free, leave me be.
- "All these other insanities would be taken care of if everyone has equal opportunities to contribute to the society. I find it attractive when societies make people communicate and work together, like Israel. Freedom isn’t free."
"As an African American growing up in the 60s and learning my history of slavery and civil rights, I have been drilled to say I must succeed. I have a certain attitude— you need to get the best possible education and resources available. Must do the best in your job. I’m being held to a different standard. But yet there’s this other perspective of people who just feel that there isn’t a need to strive for perfection."

"Even though you see people in low jobs, you can’t really know if they are there as a starter job and going to move up or if they just like that job."

"What does it mean to be successful in America as an immigrant? The ability to understand the US culture so that you can help move the country along. Big problem we face (African Americans) is that we can’t discipline your child the same way. So some things make it hard to be a part of the culture."

"What about material values? Everyone wants the good life and have nice things. Work and achieve it."

**View 3:** Social service workers or police are viewed as heavy handed, reporting situations in refugee communities too quickly.

- "The US needs an orientation to learn about everyone else’s cultures to better help them transition. It doesn’t do you any good unless you understand where they are coming from to ease their transition. Like pictures of people who are missing an eye or an ear— it is funny to us or scary to some people who come from war torn places where they actually see people like that."

- "Some refugees don’t or didn’t make decisions for many years since they were so provided for or didn’t have the chance to make decisions in the refugee camps. Then they come here and have to make all these decisions and they don’t have the skills to do so."

- "We need to have a strong military but we need to use more of this money for our education and making our country better. We need to make the US more of a contributor instead of just takers."

- "I was an electrician in my home country. I couldn’t practice in the US right away; I had to take schooling and tests. It was pointless for me to do so since it would take years and I am an old man; I would be retired by then. Ended up working as a grounds keeper."

- "Sometimes immigrants can’t transfer their credentials. Why don’t we just prove their competent like a test?"

- "Language has been an issue with places telling people different stories on how they can become certified?"

- "There aren’t really any viewpoints here that seem to be from an immigrant’s standpoint."

- "It would be good for us (Immigrants) if we could just have a central place to go and address our issues to. City needs to appoint someone to be that person. Also need to look at other communities like Minnesota and Detroit and raid what their ideas were."

- Employers’ applications are sometimes filled with slang that immigrants don’t understand. Need to phrase these things in Standard English.

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**Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary:** Tuesday, May 3, 2011

**Location:** Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance:**

- (X) Present
- ( ) Absent

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**Session 4: What Should We Do About Immigration & Community Change in Rock Island?**

**Community Impressions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>In Rock Island, every child receives a quality education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Rock Island’s health care system serves the needs of all our residents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing in Rock Island is affordable, available, clean and safe for all residents</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, neighborhoods, etc.) reflect the diversity of our population</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Local media offer fair and full coverage about immigrants and refugees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>All neighborhoods in Rock Island have access to public services (such as refuse, recycling, road maintenance, transit, police and fire protection, etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has equal access to clothing, food and everyday items.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>The social services system in Rock Island (such as job training, immigrant/refugee services, child welfare, etc.) meets everyone’s needs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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67
Categories performing worst:
- Criminal Justice
  - Minorities get stopped more
  - More biased and people are racially profiled
  - Issue seems to be a national problem, not just a Rock Island problem

- Employment
  - Everyone has an opportunity for education, but not jobs, since they don’t have all the education or skills necessary.
  - How many good paying jobs are in Rock Island besides the Arsenal?
  - Sometimes people don’t have equal opportunities, but they make their own opportunities
  - If we can’t give or provide a job, we could make job opportunities specifically for immigrant skills.

- Housing
  - There is a lot of housing that is either really good or really bad, so access to affordable and good housing is a challenge.
  - We try to take down and redo houses, but money is hard to get
  - Our housing is very full with huge waiting lists

- Transportation
  - Horrible, riding the bus is always problematic

Categories performing best:
- Public Services
  - Public services, like pick-up, are good
  - If something goes wrong, like a big item isn’t picked up, many immigrants don’t know how to deal with it or who to call. Example: neighborhood came together during a big thunderstorm and everyone was cutting down trees that had fallen.

Room for improvement?
- Hard for me to judge what someone needs since I don’t know their perspective.
- There needs to be improvement, but the only money we can gain to do this is like donations.
- The list of the organizations that are here and available should be more complete.
- We need someone to be a handoff; someone who puts all these service lists together and distribute this information accordingly.
- Learn to communicate with other cities that have different services that we could learn to use.
- Communication is always a hard part with helping immigrants. Some translator even lied about what language they spoke or understood.
- Printed materials are probably the best to help distribute information to immigrants. Would be easier and cheaper to do it over email or through technology.
- We need a speaker’s bureau and volunteers to help these immigrant families.

Ideas:
- Get a speakers’ bureau
- Complete list of all agencies available to help immigrants
- Develop transportation networks, like people who can help drive others around
- Get grants that are specifically aimed to help immigrants
- Something to put on the news media about what we are doing in this study circle, especially an on-going message.
- Approach the police and see if there can be an officer liaison between the immigrants and the police.
- Some way to have immigrant representatives be a part of leadership organizations to influence things like politics, education, and other boards.

Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island

Meeting Summary: Tuesday, May 10, 2011

Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent
(X) Ethel Bassett
(X) Mary Grace Boland
(X) Ethelene Boyd
(X) Gail Brooks
(X) Sherry Ervin
(X) Gwen Foulkes
(X) Julie Gray
(X) Colleen Guydon
(X) Ed Hanna

(X) Jack Knepp
(X) Mary Knepp
( ) Vitalis Kyulure
( ) Mary Lambrecht
( ) Patrick Noya
( ) Barbara Robinson
( ) Jenny Salisbury
(X) Esti Young

Session 5- Making a Difference: What Can We Do in Rock Island?

Action Ideas (add to Session 4 list):
- PowerPoint to Speakers’ bureau
- One stop center
- Research other communities’ experiences that are successful
- Find out from immigrants what they need
- Language needs, such as ethical interpreters and finding or developing a "cheat sheet" of visual aids to assist in communication
- Come up with an action plan that is a serious organized plan; request support from social service agencies and organizations that have a mission to provide the services needed by refugees and immigrants
- Create /maintain a database of information (from schools, United Way, the city) of services and available housing

Issues for Action:

1. Transportation
2. Language Skills: Practice with English speakers, as well as instruction in classes
3. Mentoring
4. Affordable housing
5. Jobs
6. Education

Action Steps

1. Create a Clearing House of Information/Referrals
   a. Identify services and service providers; identify needs of refugees/immigrants (United Way)
   b. Match volunteers and agencies with refugees/immigrants (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)
   c. Make information available on a website (City of Rock Island)
2. Develop a Mentoring Program (Rock Island Neighborhood Partners)
3. Research Communities with successful refugee/immigrant programs; Research funding possibilities (Rock Island Neighborhood Partners)
Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent

- Elizabeth Bucumi
- Kevin Carney
- Nyiramutatulutwa Chantal
- Sabrina Coffey
- Kate Finn
- Nancy Hanna
- Jonathan Ikoba
- Eliamu Karenzo
- Summer Lawrence
- Sherry Maurer
- Jonas Msaifi
- Joselyn Mwajuma
- Concile Ntiranyibagira
- Eric Rowell
- Hagal Rugagaza
- Vanessa Trice
- Onesfor Vidos
- S. Edward Yancy Jr.

**Icebreaker:** musical chairs (say something about yourself)

**Questions to think about**

1. How do we feel when we hear someone speaking a language we don’t speak?
   - language learning is difficult
   - not encouraged in the U.S.
   - we feel separated from people speaking another language

2. How often do we visit with others from another culture?
   - Daily/regularly (given by refugee).
   - I don’t visit with people from other countries because I can’t communicate with them.
   - I feel that often times others have to make the effort to assimilate rather than me doing this on my own.
   - Many ask children to communicate for them.

**Scenarios for Discussion**

Scenario #3: Some parents worry about the schooling their children are getting. The classes are crowded. Many of the other students are new immigrants/refugees and demand a lot of the teacher’s time.
- Why are all non-English speaking students put in the same class when they are at different levels?
  - Schools should teach English first and then focus on other areas
  - When I went to school others assumed I was stupid because I didn’t speak the language, I wish they had helped me
  - We learn languages from our friends
  - Schools will get better results if they spent more time teaching English before putting students into a regular classroom

Scenario #8: An immigrant/refugee is in a store and can’t read the labels on the food. He asks for help, and the person makes the statement that he should learn English.
- You have to learn English otherwise you can be hurt.
- We are being reactive instead of proactive (in respect to helping people learn English)
- We have to take the time to accommodate for those who come here.
- There is a negative public sentiment because the United States is becoming a multi-lingual society.
- Americans need to be educated on diversity
- Adults have difficulties in learning English because they have jobs and may only be able to go to ESL two hours/day
- People who don’t speak English feel useless because they can’t do anything (like work)

Scenario #7: A neighbor finds out that the family next door uses red pepper and whips their children to discipline them.
- This scenario is silly because in my time children were whipped. The problem is when it’s someone from another country because it hurts them
- Involving DCFS can become a problem
- If you whip your children, you may be whipping your translator. They may call the police on you if they like
- Two issues: 1. Must learn language 2. Must learn culture. The two go hand in hand and are important!
### Session 2: Visions of America: What Ties Us Together?

**Describe your America**

1. What were your expectations about living in the United States?
   - The U.S. is a peaceful country, just like I was told.
   - I heard that the U.S. was in a war.
   - There is love in this country; people in the church and my supervisor show me love.
   - People here hug each other a lot; very warmly welcomed when I returned to the U.S.
   - I am appreciative of equal opportunities for education and remember that we are all immigrants.

2. Was there a time when you or your family lived better? Has your prosperity improved over the generations?
   - Countries I lived in before had wars, people stole. We didn’t have peace and people didn’t show us love; very happy to come to this country.
   - Uganda has the same love as in the U.S. - helped me pay for my children’s school. But there was hunger and disease. The U.S. is amazing - food stamps, medical card, and schooling is free because you show love.
   - My family and I weren’t happy because there was war in my country since 1972. Now, when people talk to me I may forget what they say because I am thinking of the bad things that happened to me. Although there is peace here I do not have peace in my heart.

**What Connects Us?**

1. When and where do you feel part of the Rock Island community?
   - At school, with family, in church, with friends.
   - I like to sing with my friends; we sing and play instruments. In that time I forget everything that happened to me. At school too, which is where I learn English.
   - I think I’ve done positive things here; when you are part of a community you have a responsibility.
   - Rock Island doesn’t have the same feeling as home, but doing this makes me feel more connected to the community.

2. What brings us together in Rock Island? Is there anything you feel you can unite around?
   - Swimming pool
   - Schwiebert Park
   - Football, basketball, and track, but only during the season.
   - School, meetings like these.
   - Community festivals and community events at Augustana College.
   - Refugees learn a lot about the culture in the U.S.
   - Volunteer opportunities like at World Relief.
   - Thanks to Rock Island schools - continues to help with disabled child.

3. Describe what separates us in our community.
   - Nothing.
   - Everything is fine.
   - "Up the hill" means white. Difference between the flat, low part (where the poor, African Americans, and Latinos live) and the hill (more prosperous and whiter).
   - Separation between the haves and the have not’s. If you can afford to go up the hill you might, but they may not accept you.
   - Stepson moved from his neighborhood - he was discriminated against because he was black and his wife was white.
   - There are pockets of people who are ignorant in all parts of town.
   - My neighborhood is mixed and we don’t have any problems.
   - Lots of immigrants in Century Woods. I wish there was a common garden; too much asphalt and not enough dirt.
   - The good place to live is very expensive. The bad place is cheap.
   - Biggest problem refugees have is finding good housing/neighborhoods.

**Engaging in America**

1. What does it mean to live in the United States?
   - We will find all good things and peace.
   - Freedom and peace.
   - The rich and poor are taken the same; the government will not turn them away.
   - We live in a Great Contradiction. We have two documents that are ideal ways to live (Constitution and Bible). We haven’t followed either one.
   - In some respects immigrants and refugees are more embraced by the rest of the population than black Americans are.
     - Can cause resentment between black and immigrant/refugee communities; some blacks feel resentment because the white community doesn’t embrace them. Has to do with history between these groups that some people feed off of.
   - With refugees, there are a small number of people with specific issues that need to be addressed. But in Chicago, there’s millions - how to fix that?
   - Americans may find it easier to help refugees because to be a refugee is a very bad thing; they know our history.

2. What will help the transition of immigrants and refugees into Rock Island?
   - After hearing about recent suicides among refugees and immigrants, I wonder if immigrants/refugees know about counseling services available to them.
     - Counseling is difficult because I don’t speak English. To go to work and learn English are the most important because they help us do whatever we want to do.
   - Is English taught in refugee camps?
     - No, not in the three years I was there.
   - Refugees and immigrants have similar experiences; all we need is a chance to become part of the community.
- Housing is one of the biggest problems.
- Learning English and counseling are important because anger can take over when this doesn’t happen.

**Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island**

**Meeting Summary:** Sunday, May 4, 2014

**Location:** Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

**Attendance:** (X) Present ( ) Absent

(X) Elizabeth Bucumi  
(X) Kevin Carney  
(X) Nyiramatutulwa Chantal  
(X) Sabrina Coffey  
( ) Kate Finn  
(X) Nancy Hanna  
(X) Jonathan Ikoba  
(X) Eliamu Karenzo  
( ) Summer Lawrence  
(X) Sherry Maurer  
( ) Jonas Msafrir  
(X) Joselyn Mwajuma  
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(X) Eric Rowell  
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(X) Onesfor Vidos  
(X) S. Edward Yancy Jr.

**Session 3 - How is Our Community Changing?**

**Views for Discussion**

**View 5:** New cultures make our community better. Is it easy to keep your culture when you come to the United States?
- It’s difficult to discuss with and learn the culture from others because of the language. If you can speak English you are most likely to learn the culture around you.
- Nobody can forget the culture—it’s hard to learn another culture—for example with manner of dress, Americans may wear short skirts and we don’t.
- The harder question is to know what American culture is.
- In the 60's we wore afros, which were frowned upon, then we went to braids and that became popular—American culture is what is accepted at the time and there is profitability in this.
- Our culture changes/evolves with the “trends.”
  - Some trends aren’t accepted by everybody
- I think everybody agrees that new cultures make our country lively because otherwise we wouldn’t be here... My question is, can people who do come here keep their culture?
- According to the culture of people from Africa women never wear pants (if they did, they could be arrested). Many women come here and change their style of dress.
- I think kids have a harder time maintaining their culture because of how they are ridiculed if they don’t.
- We are talking about fashion as it relates to culture rather than how we relate to each other. I think we pay more attention to our clothes rather than to what the person has to say.

**View 1:** Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.
- At one school there are two ELL teachers for 110 students. I think our schools are failing.
  - School funding shouldn’t be tied to performance.
  - Our teaching staff lacks the patience to teach ELL/ESL students well.
  - They also lack the compassion.
- Another problem is that ELL/ESL students in Rock Island and Moline High Schools have an expectation that they are ready to go to college when they may fall (especially if they don’t get help in between)
  - Money goes towards athletics
  - And teachers’ salaries, as teachers take more classes they have to get paid more
- When I was with corrections, I got involved with ESL and as a lot of people know, many Latinos are incarcerated. We tried to be proactive rather than reactive (but that failed too because of lack of funding)
- What are the problems of refugees/immigrant children in schools?
- Once our children graduate high school we don’t really have a say in what they do. We don’t speak English, so only the children can decide what they want to do.
- I think there should be diversity training for teachers in the schools
- I am impressed with what one school is doing. I am told ESL/ELL students are kept after on Tuesday/Thursday and they have Saturday ELL days, but not all schools are like that
- My children help translate for me in certain situations, this shows that their English is getting better.
- May I caution you on that? When the child knows English better than the parent, it causes problems.

**View 4:** It creates problems when people don’t speak English
- I think it’s important to learn English, but the children should be able to maintain their native tongue.
- I think those of us who speak English lack the patience to listen to those who don’t know English.
- I think Americans are idiots. We are intolerant, we know only one language, and when we travel we look stupid because we can’t communicate. I think living in a multi-lingual society would be interesting.
- It was hard for me when I came from Africa; I asked myself, why don’t Americans learn languages from other people?
- I think there are benefits to having a common language, when you see countries with many languages (but no common language) there are problems. However, other languages will help better the society. When there are children who are young they should learn multiple languages that can help them.
Session 4 - What Should We Do About Immigration and Community Change in Rock Island?

Community Impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>All members of the community are treated fairly by the criminal justice system</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>In Rock Island, every child receives a quality education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has an equal opportunity for a good-paying job.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Rock Island's health care system serves the needs of all our residents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing in Rock Island is affordable, available, clean and safe for all residents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Our community leaders (in government, financial institutions, education, neighborhoods, etc.) reflect the diversity of our population</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Local media offer fair, full coverage about immigrants and refugees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>All neighborhoods in Rock Island have access to public services (such as refuse, recycling, road maintenance, transit, police and fire protection, etc.)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Everyone in Rock Island has equal access to clothing, food and everyday items</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>The social services system in Rock Island (such as job training, immigrant/refugee services, child welfare, etc.) meets everyone's needs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluating Impressions & Approaches to Change

1. Look at the overall impressions. Where do we agree? Where do we differ?
   - Employment: Rock Island compared with Bettendorf and Bettendorf hires more minorities despite being predominately white.
   - Public Service: I'm surprised this scored so high because there isn't access to things like recycling which you have to pay for.
   - I wonder if some of these splits are due to some being immigrants and refugees and others not.
   - One of the lowest areas I ranked was social services after knowing that these Burmese had killed themselves.
   - Social Services and social workers often can't help us (refugees). I was told I had a house in the United States; when I came here we ate nothing but bread and soda.
   - Just as a point of information, social workers take their job seriously or they don't. The service is only as good as the worker.
   - The biggest thing refugees need is social services.
   - Social services were better in North Carolina, when I moved here I had a hard time finding social services.

2. When you look at the Community Impressions, what successes do you see?
   - I think most of the responses are fair.
   - Looking at the results, if you go by the numbers leadership should be discussed because it is split.
   - Healthcare: I think doctors are doing a great job but on the other side I (lowa) they aren't doing well. You need a translator to go to the hospital because no one can help you otherwise. I think the hospital should look for translators because otherwise people could die because of miscommunication.
   - Employment, healthcare, housing, and social services did poorly.

3. How can Rock Island improve Employment?
   - Improve hiring practices.
   - For the population that has limited language skills, if we could match immigrants with jobs where they could be trained. I'm specifically thinking of a program that teaches people to draw blood for local labs or nursing home assistants. Maybe the language could be taught specifically for these jobs.
   - There's a problem—a lot of things should be improved, but if we cost money. To match these skills, teaching English, will involve taking money from profits. Maybe the government could offer incentives to companies.
- Many people don't have transportation, waiting for the bus when you are sick is horrible and the ambulance is too expensive, plus you have to bring a translator.
- A translator will not solve all of your problems because they would be needed for many languages, not just one.
- Having nurses and nursing assistants who speak many languages would be helpful and more efficient.

Housing:
- Safe and clean housing were important to me because not all housing is this way. Affordable maybe, but not really clean and safe.
- I disagree because even World Relief has a hard time providing housing for its clients.
- I think all of this goes together.
- In Rock Island I believe we have slumlord laws that need to be enforced.
- I've heard that landlords at Century Woods don't treat refugees very well, maybe we should be citing/shaming some of them. People would be interested in those stories and businesses don't like bad press.
- Housing is too expensive when you have to pay rent and other bills.
- I'm not sure if those houses are helping the refugees.
- There should be a low-interest housing law, maybe that will help people make payments (but you would have to involve the landlords).
- Many people are moving out of Century Woods because if they get a job they have to pay more for housing.

Social Services?
- One position should be dedicated to special needs for immigration because their job is to connect people with their needs. This would be one place that directs immigrants and refugees on where to go.
- State agencies need a better assessment tool to see if they are giving their services correctly. There has to be a way to show them what they aren't doing.

Media?
- Positive reporting of immigration and refugee issues should occur.
- Regular reporting about poor landlords/housing.
- Focus on what the leaders in Rock Island could do better.

Shopping?
- I'm surprised shopping did that well, because there's not much below the hill.
- Place like Family Dollar cost a lot because it's convenient.

Wrap-Up
1. What else can the city do to improve these areas?
   - Create a welcoming organization that matches people with those who can help them.
   - There is a danger in education, many students don't have transportation.
   - Question: I have a disabled child, be we have no transportation to and back from school.
   - Because of the distrust between immigrants and social services, there's a notion you won't get help and there's a notion you won't always get help and the person who provided it has an attitude too.
   - Better communication between the community and social services.
   - These things could be improved if the leadership reached out to the immigrant community.
   - Look for organizations to help refugees find jobs.
   - Work with Habitat for Humanity to create more housing for immigrants and refugees.

2. What changes in city, school or other institutional policies do we need to deal with large number of new immigrants/refugees?
   - A department in the city to serve those who are immigrants and refugees.
   - The city should study best practices in cities who have had large increases in immigrant and refugee populations.
   - We should be creating a mission statement for the city to follow.

3. What changes in social services do we need to deal with large numbers of new immigrants/refugees?
   - Relationships with families and children.
   - Create opportunities for adults to meet with English speakers to practice conversation.
   - Better communication.

Changing Faces of Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island
Meeting Summary: Sunday, May 15, 2016
Location: Broadway Presbyterian Church, 710 23rd Street, Rock Island, IL

Attendance: (X) Present ( ) Absent
(X) Elizabeth Bucumi
(X) Kevin Carney
(X) Nyiramutatutu Chantal
(X) Sabrina Coffey
(X) Kate Finn
(X) Nancy Hanna
(X) Jonathan Ikoba
(X) Eliamu Karenzo
(X) Summer Lawrence

(X) Sherry Maurer
(X) Jonas Msafiri
(X) Joselyn Mwajuma
(X) Concilie Nitanyibagira
(X) Eric Rowell
(X) Hagal Rugagaza
(X) Vanessa Trice
(X) Onesfor Vidos
(X) S. Edward Yancy Jr.
Setting Priorities for Action

1. Which two or three steps or strategies would you most like to see people in Rock Island work on?
   1. Housing
   2. Jobs
   3. Schooling (ESL)

   - Create a department/agency that works with immigrants and refugees.
   - Create opportunities for adults to meet with English speakers to practice conversation.
   - Create a vision statement.
   - In Africa there were housing programs that were available, where houses were built for people and they could pay for the houses slowly...it was a poor country but it still worked.
     - There’s a group called ReachMenders which was taken over by the Rock Island Economic Growth Organization. They worked with people to build houses.
     - Habitat for Humanity and the Rock Island Economic Growth Organization should help people get housing in an expedited fashion.
   - Companies (financial institutions), city officials (City Council, Aldermen), school officials, and landlord organizations should be invited to the Action Forum.

Crafting Action Steps Together

1. Acting individually or in small groups, how can we help our community make progress on issues related to immigrants/refugees?

   - Make action steps specific so that we can hold a small group of people responsible
   - Setting up a department that helps immigrants and refugees would require a small group of people
   - As a small group we could make the city see our problems and maybe create more than one department (depending on the need)

Action Steps:

1. Create a mayor appointed committee with a translator, banker, lawyer, politician, hospital (Genesis hospital systems), police, educators (administration, classroom instructor) from Rock Island School District, Augustana, and Black Hawk, business (managing), immigrants/refugees, World Relief, Housing Authority, news reporter, Department of Health and Human Services, and maybe other representatives, who will be charged with improving housing, jobs, and improving English acquisition. They should also develop a vision statement for Rock Island as it pertains to immigrants and refugees and study best practices (national studies/data) from other communities.

2. Work with private organizations throughout town that can help in Rock Island (churches for example) to create programming that helps with issues we’ve discussed (like housing, ESL, jobs, etc).
   - Volunteers should be involved more (like in ESL teaching). Groups around the area (like SAFARI- Student Advocates for the Awareness of Refugee and Immigrant Issues- can see this as a cultural exchange, high schoolers and middle schoolers could also volunteer).
   - A private group could also pay for a booth at the farmer’s market where immigrants and refugees could sell crafts (many of them know how to make things like purses... they could be sold). This would also be a cultural exchange.

3. Create opportunities for workers to learn English on the job (possibly during lunch hour if not during a time set aside by the employer).

Who Can Help Make a Difference?

2. What other groups can help and how can we reach them? What other kinds of support or help do we need?
   - Employers: create volunteer opportunities for their employees to volunteer with immigrants and refugees.
   - Organizations within immigrant and refugee communities. We could contact leaders and involve them.
   - Some churches have organizations, but these people don’t get paid.
   - Translators should be involved in ESL classes (they would be much better this way)

Which Ideas Should We Share at the Action Forum?

   - The three listed above
   - To be presented by Kevin Carney and Eliamu Karenzo

Wrap-Up

4. Do you believe the action steps identified can be implemented? Why or why not?
   - If officials are serious about this, we can get it to work.
   - If people are committed to the welfare of immigrants and refugees then yes.
   - A commitment must be made by officials and the community.
Report Back to Study Circles

Selected representatives from the Action Teams will be asked to report back about progress to the 129 Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island participants and Action Team members. A dinner will be provided by the Doris & Victor Day Foundation. Registration is required by contacting Jill Doak at 309.732.2900 or doak.jill@rigov.org.

Thursday, December 1, 2011
5 to 8 p.m.
Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center
630 9th Street
Rock Island, IL

Dinner will be from 5 to 6 p.m. and presentations will begin at 7 p.m.

Thank you for your participation in this community-wide dialogue for change and call to action.

Rock Island is better with thoughtful input and volunteer efforts from its citizens and residents. This project could not have been completed without considerate study circle participants and the many dedicated hours of the Pilot and Action Oversight Groups.

Additional thanks go to Everyday Democracy, the Doris & Victor Day Foundation for providing funding for refreshments, the volunteer facilitators and Augustana College student note takers named on page 8, the many organizations that provided facilities for the study circles, and the Community Caring Conference for child care services.

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Changing Faces: Refugees & Immigrants in Rock Island