



**HEAR OUR VOICES:
ENGAGE 2013 SURVEY REPORT**

Immigrant & Refugee Community
Organization

Diversity & Civic Leadership Program

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IRCO Engage

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ENGAGE 2013 Survey is the first detailed look at the civic engagement behaviors and attitudes among the diverse non-Hispanic immigrant and refugee communities that IRCO's Diversity & Civic Leadership (DCL) Program serves in the Portland Metro area. The survey instrument was adapted from the National Civic and Political Health Survey. A total of 255 valid surveys were collected by 15 DCL Program staff and trained leaders, with survey participants coming from 27 different cultural backgrounds. The results will not only help the DCL program understand the status and nature of civic participation in these communities, but will also help strengthen involvement of immigrant and refugee communities with government staff and local officials.

Some highlights from the ENGAGE 2013 Survey:

- Among the four different immigrant & refugee communities (African, Asian, Pacific Islander and Slavic), there are some general patterns for Civic Indicators and wide diversity for Electoral and Political Voice Indicators.
- Survey participants were very active in volunteering in faith-based and Mutual Assistance Associations and working within their communities to address various issues.
- There is a very high voting rate (95%) for local and national election (31% of participants were registered voters), while others cited the lack of citizenship as their barrier to voting.
- Survey participants are more likely to attend community forums/events hosted by non-government organizations than governmental organizations.
- There are common themes that participants identified as barriers to be more involved: time constraints due to other life/work obligations and commitments, language barriers to be full engaged with mainstream society, lack of knowledge on government and political involvement, distrust or fear of government, and citizenship to have voices heard.
- Common solutions suggested by the participants included: empowering community leaders, increasing access to information, creating more opportunities through education and involvement, working with organizations which have developed good rapport with the communities.

INTRODUCTION

IRCO's Diversity & Civic Leadership Program (DCL), funded by the City of Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement, works to develop immigrant & refugee community members (a.k.a. New Portlanders) and organizations to become effective advocates engaging in government and neighborhood policies and initiatives. The program's signature activity is the ENGAGE training offered annually. More than 150 New Portlanders have participated in this program from 2008 to 2013, educating, organizing, informing, and engaging a new generation of leaders.

The goals of ENGAGE 2013 are to (a) understand and document the ways in which New Portlanders participate in civic and political life (b) build ENGAGE leaders' capacity to document the current status of civic participation in their own communities and other New Portlander communities and (c) educate government and other stakeholders on status/barriers of New Portlanders for civic participation.

The ENGAGE 2013 Survey is a Community Based Participatory Research project in which the process was designed to build community capacity to engage community leaders and encourage ownership of this research. ENGAGE leaders were involved in (1) data collection in their respective communities, (2) data analysis: reviewing and guiding quantitative and qualitative data interpretation, (3) planning presentation formats and venues for the report, (4) facilitating presentation at different venues, and (5) planning for future release of the final report.

The survey instrument was adapted from the Civic and Political Health Survey¹ (CPHS) developed by The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement. CPHS measured civic engagement in three areas (i.e., civic, electoral, and political voice) using 19 indicators (see Appendix A). The ENGAGE 2013 Survey added five questions of program interests (e.g., served on government boards, committees, or councils, attended non-government forums, etc.) and three open-ended questions for each of the three engagement areas to collect information on motivation and barriers of civic engagement. Fifteen ENGAGE leaders collected a total of 255 valid surveys with survey participants coming from 27 different cultural backgrounds (See Appendix B for survey participant demographic data).

¹ Andolina, M., et al., 2003, *A Guide to the Index of Civic and Political Engagement*, The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE)

CIVIC INDICATORS

Civic indicators include patterns of volunteering and community involvement and are a key component of a democratic society. ENGAGE 2013 Survey participants averaged higher on most civic indicators as compared to the national average. These indicators included: being active in community problem solving, regularly volunteering for a non-electoral organization, being an active member in a group or organization, and raising money for charity.

	African	Slavic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Total	National Data (2006) ²
1. Community Problem Solving	53%	61%	75%	58%	62%	20%
2. Regular volunteering for a non-electoral organization	82%	76%	75%	71%	77%	22%
3. Active membership in a group or association	34%	47%	66%	63%	51%	22%
4. Participation in fund-raising run/walk/ride	9%	26%	37%	16%	22%	34%
5. Other fund raising for charity	49%	52%	68%	50%	55%	27%

Characteristics of Civic Involvement

Involvement in local community issues can be enacted not just through governance, but by working directly with fellow community members. Sixty-two percent (62%) of ENGAGE 2013 survey participants, as compared to the national sample (20%), indicated that they had worked informally at an individual or group level on solving community-wide issues. While survey participants may be less likely to be formally involved in local community issues, either through political or government processes (see next sections), informal community engagement, outside of these formal structures, appears more common with survey participants when compared with national data.

ENGAGE 2013 survey participants also ranked higher than the national comparison in regular volunteering for non-electoral organizations, active membership in groups or organizations, and fund raising and charity involvement. The only indicator for which ENGAGE 2013 survey participants scored lower than the national data was in

² Lopez, M., et al., 2006, The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: Questionnaire and Complete Tabulations, The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE)

involvement in fund raising runs/walks/rides (22% compared to 34% national data). While survey participants overall are very involved in other fund raising activities (55% compared to 27% national data), running/walking/riding are not regular fund raising mechanisms for most ENGAGE survey participants because these kind of activities are not common in their home countries. The Asian community is the only exception with 37% of the respondents having participated in runs/walks/rides fund raising events.

Qualitative survey responses showed that most of the survey participants who are involved in civic activities do so because they want to contribute to the betterment of society. A majority of those surveyed also indicated that the reason they are or have been involved in civic activities is their desire to improve or help others in their communities and to voice their opinions in order to bring about positive changes.

Survey participants are often involved in community-specific groups and activities such as faith-based organizations or groups specific to their respective communities. One leader from a Pacific Islander community states that church is a center for social involvement and volunteering.

“For Pacific Islanders... it is also a lot of involvement in religious activities. And mainly the religion there is Christianity and there is a lot of involvement there. One thing that needs to be pointed out is that church is all about volunteering, even back home... Plus, everyone wants to be at church because that is where they see their people, that is where they get to meet their people and they feel a sense of belonging. Our country is very community oriented. There is no ‘I’m looking after my own’, everyone looks after everyone else and so that is pretty much why they are involved in church.... When you talk about civic engagement, we’re not talking about “these people” or these people engaging in mainstream cultures, they are engaging within their own culture.... It’s not about working with other people, it’s about working together as a community.”

One Slavic leader shared the historical and cultural background of this form of community gathering, noting that their time and commitments are fully invested in church.

“...when the Slavic community came here, they [had] religious reasons [for coming] here. That is why in the Portland Metro area we have around 150,000 people and when they came here they establish[ed] the churches. Leaders of the churches bring these people together and around 80% of the Slavic community [is involved] in the church.... And a lot of time, every single day, the church has a lot of activities.”

In addition to religious motivations for civic involvement, established immigrant and refugee communities help newcomers settle into this country. One African leader described how their community comes together and to support each other:

“The purpose of that (volunteering) in the community is to help the new arrivals. Especially those that come here with diversity visa, they have no one here. When they get here, they are left open, they don’t know where to go or where to start. One of our community members was about to commit suicide. That is one of the reasons why we came up with this community- to bring them together, give information, or help them until they get to know the area. Especially when we are talking about time, we are not the only ones who are working here to survive, everyone in this country...but whoever is working to survive they still have time, they can share or give their time. But we don’t know how. You don’t have to fill out an application to do that. When someone comes, for example what we do in our community, if I show him today how to take a bus, then another person will take him to some resource tomorrow... We are trying to show him wherever. This is really the important kind of volunteering we do in our community and then expand it if we can. Donation is the same thing. For the new arrivals, they do not have any money. So what we do is contribute. Put money together and help them to find job.”

Another African leader mentioned volunteering is a way of life:

“We always volunteer, it is African life. You volunteer for the community if someone passed away, someone has a child you always volunteer, someone is sick. You know, it’s just our life.

Barriers to Civic Involvement

The most cited barrier to civic participation in the mainstream society was lack of time. People do not have time due to other life obligations such as churches, family, work, and school. Other often cited barriers include lack of English proficiency, financial constraints, and lack of knowledge about how to participate. One Pacific Islander shared how the language barrier influenced parent involvement in schools:

“I’ve been working in the schools and a lot of parents are not involved in their children’s education and that’s all because they don’t understand. When the school calls they just hang up. And then the school kinda interpret that as ‘they don’t wanna be involved.’ No, they want to be involved, but they just don’t know how to, how to get involved because they can’t speak the language.... And finally they just feel disconnected and they just don’t know what to do, to be part of the mainstream society, to be engaged.”

Support Civic Involvement in Communities

Several leaders shared the importance of outreach and engagement with community leaders:

“In our (Pacific Islander) cultures, the host is usually the one who gets people involved. We as visitors cannot come in and make a lot of noise and “we’re gonna do this”...no we cannot...so basically, how can we reach these communities? If we reach the leaders... the church leaders... then I think that can really get these people involved.”

“If the pastors will fully understand the benefit of participation in the city, in the county, other meetings, this is will be more powerful thing, education of the Slavic pastors and leaders.”

“And the better we can try outreach them (community members), we can have positive motivation and empower the leadership so the leadership can work as a bridge to the new communities and the city government and other stakeholders.”

One African leader testified that leaders’ encouragement to the communities could help the community to be more engaged:

“It was not a long time ago that we mobilized this community to go out and do the environmental cleaning.... The entire community was invited.... We are just trying to educate people to go out and recharge and do their community service. That is why the number is brought up.”

Another often cited solution to barriers for civic engagement is for communities to gain knowledge about volunteering. One Pacific Islander leader states:

“It depends on the nature of how we translate to our community, and let them understand what it’s for. I think we need more education, educated our community about the system we use here in the United States...As soon as we give them the ideas and the reasons why, they look at us and say okay I will give you money running and spending my dime riding on a bike. It is very important that I give them the right information.”

One African leader speaks about the lack of information fellow community members have on volunteering processes and opportunities:

“When I asked them (about volunteering), most of them asked me what that means, I was trying to explain what it means. Those people are really very interested, but they did not have any information about it.... They are really

willing, or are really interested in this thing but they said, 'How do I make that happen, where should I start, what do I need?' All that kind of question."

Other suggestions to civic engagement barriers mentioned in the survey include: eliminating the language barrier through learning English or having translation/interpretation available, and obtaining financial means to participate.

ELECTORAL INDICATORS

Electoral indicators focus on the political process and include activities such as voting, influencing others to vote, or volunteering for political campaigns (Andolina, et al., 2003). ENGAGE survey added question 7 to the survey to understand of the local context.

Characteristics of Electoral Involvement

	African	Slavic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Total	National Data (2006)
1. Registered Voters	29%	21%	58%	11%	31%	78%
2. Regular voting	79%	100%	97%	100%	95%	50%
3. Persuading others to vote	9%	22%	27%	24%	20%	39%
4. Displaying campaign buttons, signs, stickers	4%	20%	17%	14%	14%	26%
5. Campaign contributions	0%	9%	25%	8%	10%	11%
6. Volunteering for candidate or political organizations	1%	11%	20%	5%	10%	2%
7. Attendance at issues/candidate forums/voter education events	0%	28%	42%	13%	22%	n/a

Of 255 survey participants, 31% were registered voters. Nine-five percent (95%) of the registered voters reported that they voted in local & national elections, much higher than the national data (50%). In terms of election related activities, the average totals are lower or similar to the national data (e.g., #3, persuading others to vote: 20%, compared to 39% national data; #4, displaying campaign buttons, signs: 14%, compared to 26%).

Volunteering for candidates or political organizations is the exception where survey respondents measured higher than the national average (10%, compared to 2%). The ENGAGE Survey added an additional question because the ENGAGE program has been actively educating/organizing communities to attend issue/candidate forums or voter education events. While it is a testament that 22% of participants responded they were involved in those activities, we acknowledge that there is still work to be done to serve African communities (0% attendance) and the Pacific Islander community (13% attendance).

There are some activities where the various communities' responses diverged greatly from one another. For example, 25% of Asian participants contributed money to a candidate, a political party, or any organization that supported candidates (i.e., campaign contributions), compared to 9% of Slavic, 8% of Pacific Islanders, and 0% of

African members. There are similar patterns for item no. 6, “volunteering for candidates or political organizations” and no. 7, “attendance at issues/candidate forums or voter registration events.”

The African community is in general less involved in the electoral activities. Three African community members shared their insights:

“I think they are not really in favor of it- elections, donating money, big campaigning, or convincing someone, I don't think so. But many of Congolese are not eligible to vote. And also people don't believe that they can elect, they can vote, then something will change. It's not because you elect someone, your situation will change.”

“Sometimes there is a difference between how donation is used here in the United States and the way they use it back home. So in our community, we use donation in certain occasions, like when somebody dies, when somebody is having a wedding, when somebody is having a problem. We don't just take money and give to some people somewhere.”

“In my community...but it's not for the US. The meetings are more for what's going on back home (in Africa). Have discussions about what we could do to support and help, but not for anything here though.”

For the participants who were involved in the electoral process, a majority of them said that they do so out of a sense of civic duty and that they want to be involved in effecting change. Quotes from different community members:

“Everybody has a responsibility for where they live even if it's a host country. We should take part in shaping our society, even if it is through dialoging.” (Pacific Islander)

“I want to have my say. Don't want other people to decide for me.” (African)

“Issues I care about are being decided.” (Slavic)

“(One Mayor candidate) went to Laos fundraising event and wanted to meet Lao leaders. He listens, so I went to his candidate forum.” (Asian)

Barriers to Electoral Participation

The most cited barrier to engaging in elections among all survey participants was lack of citizenship. Eligibility, cost, and language barriers for citizenship tests were all part of

the challenged for people gaining citizenship. This is particularly true for Pacific Islander community.

“We are not eligible to vote even though we’re treated as citizens, and you know we can stay and work as much, as long as we want, but we can’t vote.” (Pacific Islander)

Another often cited barrier is lack of trust in government and politicians and noting feeling their involvement would make a difference.

“In our (home) country, we are military government, so when we vote, we are forced to vote in our country. So we have no choice. This mind is still in them, even when we are in the United States. Sometimes, they are afraid: ‘If I do something, what will the government do on me?’ They still have this kind of thinking. ‘Even if I vote, it doesn’t matter; it doesn’t change it or something’ they are thinking. ‘My vote doesn’t matter because if I do or if I don’t do it doesn’t change it or something like that’ this is still in mind.” (Asian)

“A lot of people don’t wanna participate in government structure and government committee because if the leaders from the church said, ‘this is not good,’ it’s not good.... And back to our country, back to Russia or Ukraine...the government all the time a lot of time promises but never did.... They bring their own culture here and live in Russia culture, live in Slavic culture they still living. They don’t wanna believe the government. They bring all that experience.” (Slavic)

“My biggest barrier is who to vote exactly, because I don’t trust political people.” (African)

Other two cited barriers include a lack of knowledge and information about the electoral system and language.

“Most of them don’t know how to get out and register or vote. The thing is that kind of a lack of information in most cases. Information in general, like they are not aware of the difference they can make if they vote and plus they don’t know where to go. They are not really familiar with the neighborhood, or where the election stations are located.” (African)

“Because of the limitation of the language, the language barrier is the constraint. Because the information is in English, English is the limitation, it does not reach the community.” (Asian)

Support Electoral Involvement in Communities

As mentioned, citizenship is a key component of encouraging electoral involvement among immigrant and refugee groups. Thus, facilitating the citizenship processes or providing more information about the citizenship process could aid community members in electoral participation.

“About the not citizen, because some community members who are already 5-7 years, but they are afraid of this exam for citizen because of the limitation of the language so as Zomi Association of US, we make translation of these 100 questions in a booklet, and now many people read it and understand what it’s saying, “Oh! I can do that now!” (Asian)

Survey participants need more of an understanding in order to increase their involvement. Community based organizations educating the communities through community leaders is an effective way to address the barriers. A couple of community leaders shared their experiences in length in our meetings:

“We didn’t really care about anything. But since we started connecting with IRCO ..., things start clicking.... It’s like we going from ground zero and we are almost at 50% right now on trying to connect with our community. I think about citizenship and everything, but ours is connect with the organization. I am thankful for IRCO for being connecting and training they do for us. It works very well for us. The more we have trainings the better for my community and I’m looking forward to bringing people from my community be trained like I have so we’ll be on the same page of outreaching to the rest of our community.” (Pacific Islander)

“One of the things is Asian Family Center³- their engagement program (ENGAGE)- and they just train the leaders, and we went to the communities, and we just expanded. So that’s one of the reasons that we’ve gotten more (involved), because we feel empowered” (Asian)

³ Asian Family Center is one of IRCO’s locations.

POLITICAL VOICE INDICATORS

Political Voice indicators refer to active involvement in political issues outside of the electoral process. These could be activities related to consumer rights and advocacy, connecting community voice to government through activities such as phone calls, canvassing, petitions, or protesting. The ENGAGE Survey added 4 additional questions (#10-13) relating to serving on boards or commissions and participating in public forums.

Characteristics of Political Involvement

	African	Slavic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Total	National Data (2006)
1. Contacting officials	7%	18%	29%	8%	16%	18%
2. Contacting the newspapers/magazines	0%	6%	16%	5%	7%	10%
3. Contacting the TV/Radio stations	6%	4%	16%	3%	7%	8%
4. Protesting, marching, and demonstration	0%	16%	16%	13%	11%	7%
5. Signing e-mail petitions	10%	18%	32%	16%	19%	19%
6. Signing written petitions	19%	10%	32%	13%	19%	24%
7. Boycotting	19%	16%	21%	8%	17%	35%
8. Buycotting	9%	18%	27%	13%	17%	32%
9. Canvassing	0%	12%	13%	3%	7%	2%
10. Served on governmental board	3%	1%	18%	8%	7%	n/a
11. Served on non-governmental board	12%	23%	35%	8%	21%	n/a
12. Attended government forums	3%	15%	27%	9%	13%	n/a
13. Attended non-government forums	50%	38%	57%	37%	46%	n/a

There was a sizeable amount of difference among the groups in terms of their political involvement for most of the questions. The Asian community scored higher on most indicators as compared to other groups. The Pacific Islander and African groups tend to score lower. For example, 29% of Asian respondents contacted or visited a public official to ask for assistance or to express your opinion, compared to 7% of African and 8% of Pacific Islander in this category. Boycotting (question #7) and buycotting (question #8) were found to be uncommon ways of voicing opinions for the survey participants (17% same for both boycotting and buycotting, compared to national 35% and 32%, respectively.)

Another pattern observed in the survey for questions 10-13 is that communities are more likely to serve on non-governmental than governmental board/committees and attended community forums hosted by non-government organizations than by government. For example, 23% of Slavic served on non-governmental boards/committees, and only 1% served on governmental boards/committees. Fifty percent (50%) of African respondents attended community forums hosted by non-government organizations, compared to 3% attended forums hosted by the government.

“Slavic community members can be active in community events, business events, and gatherings, but generally these are internal community events and they aren’t likely to attend events hosted by government.”

The majority of those involved in the Political Voice activities stated that the two related reasons for their involvement were to be a voice with the goal of helping or improving their community and to learn more from others in the broader community.

“I get involved only when there is an imminent effect on my people and for future generations.” (Pacific Islander)

“The issues are related to me personally and the community I identified myself with.” (Asian)

“To improve the community. To make our community self-sufficient. When I attend, I get some experience that I can pass my experience to my community so we can reach our goals.” (African)

“For self to learn about different government. Voice opinion to see changes in the community.” (Slavic)

Barriers to Political Engagement

The most cited common barrier for all the communities is the lack of time due to other commitments and obligations. This is especially true for the Asian community.

“I have been involved because I believe in the cause, but to be more actively involved takes time that I don’t have.” (Asian)

Another often cited barriers was lack of knowledge of the political system followed by lack of citizenship. Participants felt that they could not become involve in the political activities (e.g., contacting officials or write petitions) if they do not have citizenship.

“Only citizen can participate and I am not yet a US citizen.” (African)

“Nobody told me that I can do something like that.” (Slavic)

"(The barrier is) citizenship status: I am not a citizen." (Pacific Islander)

Limited English proficiency created barriers in learning the political system and become involved.

"I know for sure that the reason why my community is not doing this is because of the language barrier." (Pacific Islander)

Lack of trust in politicians, lack of interest, and fear of consequences for speaking up were also mentioned as barriers to political participation.

"I feel I'm an outsider. Being a traditional Chinese, I don't think one person can make much social change politically. There are bureaucrats controlling most of the things." (Asian)

"I felt that I don't have any voice, or no one will hear my voice." (African)

Support Political Involvement in Communities

When participants were asked how they could be more involved politically, the most cited support was gaining information on how to get involved. They also cited language barriers as a huge issue and that learning English or getting information in their respective language would be helpful. Participants also cited getting involved in groups such as advisory boards, organizations, or other groups, receiving personal encouragement or invitations, the presence of relevant issues that are personally impactful, and breaking down the fear of consequences of involvement due to legal status in the country.

Participants cited a desire to be more connected with the broader community through public engagement and the need to feel that their voice is appreciated and recognized.

"Give us a platform to come and voice concerns. Have access to key people (commissioners, etc.)" (Pacific Islander)

"More connection to local stakeholders and governmental offices." (Asian)

"Knowing my opinion will matter and make a difference." (Slavic)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Methodology

The ENGAGE 2013 Survey is a Community Based Participatory Research project, developed by ENGAGE community leaders who were involved in every step of the process. ENGAGE leaders collected data from their respective communities and helped analyze the data by reviewing and guiding quantitative and qualitative data interpretation. ENGAGE leaders also steered the planning of presentations to the broader community- deciding on the format and venues for presenting, including the facilitation of a presentation and round-robin group discussion at the City Hall to government staff on April 13, 2013. ENGAGE leaders also reviewed and guided the final release of this report.

The survey instrument was adapted from the Civic and Political Health Survey (CPHS) developed by The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement. CPHS measured civic engagement in three areas (i.e., civic, electoral, and political voice) using 19 indicators (see Appendix A). The ENGAGE 2013 Survey added five indicators of local interests (e.g., served on government boards/committees/councils, attended non-government forums, etc.). These indicators were added according to areas of DCL's Program understanding of local context. Interview protocol was developed and participant consent forms were developed. Three open-ended questions for each of the three areas (i.e., Civic Involvement, Electoral, and Political Voice) were also added to collect more in-depth information on motivation and barriers of civic engagement.

Before the survey collection, the community leaders went through training on how to conduct interviews and follow interview protocols. Community members needed to live, work, worship, or play in the Portland Metro area in order to be eligible for this research survey. The survey was anonymous. Survey participants provided their contact information on separate sheet of paper if they would like to receive the full report. Leaders interviewed the survey participants one-on-one in respondents' preferred languages. Fifteen ENGAGE leaders collected a total of 255 valid surveys with each one of them collected 5-20 surveys.

Leaders helped translated the collected data into English. Qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data sources includes survey responses to the open-ended questions, transcripts from leader data review meetings, and small group discussions. Qualitative data were coded and discussed by 2 coders, with at least one from respective community, and themes were generated. These themes were then summarized to find general trends, community-specific trends, and to highlight individual stories highlighting examples of trends identified.

Limitations

The current sample and Community Based Participatory Research methods suffice for the purposes of showing a snapshot of community characteristics in public involvement among local non-Hispanic immigrant and refugee communities- of which IRCO Diversity & Civic Leadership Program serves. This research does not try to generalize to all immigrant & refugee communities in the Portland Metro area.

Another major limitation is the small sample size of the survey when broken down by specific populations and the potential for sampling bias given that the survey participants represented a convenience sample. Community members were selected by interviewers and may represent selective characteristics of community involvement based on their connection to community leaders or community organizations.

Another limitation of the current research is the difference between the current survey participants and the national sample. The Civic and Political Health Survey (CPHS) is a sample of political and community participation among participants aged 15 and older; ENGAGE survey participants 18 and older. Caution needs to be made when compared those two sets of data.

CONCLUSIONS

The 2013 ENGAGE survey provided responses that showed the range in lived experiences and barriers to involvement within the Portland metro area's immigrant and refugee communities. Using three groups of survey indicators (civic, electoral, and political voice), some shared themes and differences surfaced within different areas of civic involvement among the four groups (African, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Slavic).

It is encouraging to see high levels of volunteering (in faith-based and community organizations) and community problem solving. Of those participants that were able and registered to vote, 95% voted. Beyond voting, electoral indicators showed each community participated at varying levels in volunteering politically or influencing others to vote. The survey also indicated low levels of active political involvement outside of the electoral process (in advocacy, such as phone banking, canvassing, petitioning, serving on government boards, etc.).

Those surveyed also provided suggestions to the government and community based organizations to help increase civic involvement including: empowering community leaders, increasing access to information, and creating more opportunities through education and involvement, working with organizations which have developed good rapport with the communities.

The 2013 ENGAGE survey provides a snapshot into our community, but the survey does have its limitations both in scope and size of sample. While it does not represent the entire immigrant and refugee community in the metro area, it does provide us with a view into the characteristics of the communities that are served by IRCO and the Diversity and Civic Leadership program. We were able to disaggregate and examine individual communities and their responses to the 21 indicators provided. The data collected from the survey can provide background to recommendations and assist as a basis for conversation in creating a more inclusive and supportive community. It is a stepping stone into building our communities that can help community leaders and public officials better serve the growing diversity of Portland and the metro area.

An in-depth personal reflection from a Chukeese community leader can be found in the appendix. The ultimate goal of ENGAGE is to develop community leaders and IRCO is grateful so many of them were able to share their energy, time and passion for this project.

APPENDIX A: CORE INDICATORS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Indicator	Survey Question
Civic Indicators	
<i>Community Problem Solving</i>	Have you ever worked together informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live?
<i>Regular volunteering for a non-electoral organization</i>	Have you ever spent time participating in any community service or volunteer activity, or haven't you had time to do this?
<i>Active membership in a group or association</i>	Do you belong to or donate money to any groups or associations, either locally or nationally? Are you an active member of this group/any of these groups, a member but not active, or have you given money only?
<i>Participation in fund-raising run/walk/ride</i>	Have you personally walked, ran, or bicycled for a charitable cause -this is separate from sponsoring or giving money to this type of event?
<i>Other fund raising for charity</i>	And have you ever done anything else to help raise money for a charitable cause?
Electoral Indicators	
<i>Regular voting</i>	Can you tell me how often you vote in local and national elections? Always, sometimes, rarely, or never?
<i>Persuading others</i>	When there is an election taking place do you generally talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, or not?
<i>Displaying buttons, signs, stickers</i>	Do you wear a campaign button, put a sticker on your car, or place a sign in front of your house, or aren't these things you do?
<i>Campaign contributions</i>	Have you contributed money to a candidate, a political party, or any organization that supported candidates?
<i>Volunteering for candidate or political organizations</i>	From volunteering sequence, respondent indicated having volunteered for "A political organization or candidates running for office"

Political Voice Indicators	
<i>Contacting officials</i>	Have you contacted or visited a public official - at any level of government - to ask for assistance or to express your opinion?
<i>Contacting the print media</i>	Contacted a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue?
<i>Contacting the broadcast media</i>	Called in to a radio or television talk show to express your opinion on a political issue, even if you did not get on the air?
<i>Protesting</i>	Taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration?
<i>E-mail petitions</i>	Signed an e-mail petition?
<i>Written petitions</i>	And have you ever signed a written petition about a political or social issue?
<i>Boycotting</i>	NOT bought something because of conditions under which the product is made, or because you dislike the conduct of the company that produces it?
<i>Buycotting</i>	Bought a certain product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it?
<i>Canvassing</i>	Have you worked as a canvasser - having gone door to door for a political or social group or candidate?

Source: The Civic and Political Health of the Nation Report by Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, Molly Andolina, and Krista Jenkins, CIRCLE, 2002.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

	# of Surveys (%)	Ethnicities
African	84 (32.9%)	Congolese, Somali, Oromo, Senegalese, Burundian, Nigerian, Center African, Eritrean, Tanzanian, Zimbabwean, Ivorian, Togolese, Ethiopian
Slavic	68 (26.7%)	Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian
Asian	65 (25.5%)	Laotian, Chinese, Bhutanese, Zomi, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Thai, Asian multiple
Pacific Islander	38 (14.9%)	Chuukese, Tongan, Samoan
Total	255 (100.0%)	

Category	# of Surveys	%
Gender		
Male	139	54.5%
Female	116	45.5%
Age		
18-25	54	21.2%
26-40	96	37.6%
41-60	82	32.2%
over 60	22	8.6%
Number of Years in US		
Less than 2 years	16	6.3%
2-5 years	67	26.3%
More than 5 years	172	67.5%
Number of Years in Portland Metro		
Less than 2 years	22	8.6%
2-5 years	86	33.7%
More than 5 years	147	57.6%
Education		
Some College or Higher in US	127	49.8%
Some College or Higher outside US	100	39.2%
Household Income		
Lower than Federal Poverty Line	154	60.4%
Equal or higher than Federal Poverty Line	90	35.3%
Didn't Answer	11	4.3%

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY LEADER REFLECTION

Enlet Jr. Enlet, May 22, 2013

The thought of having to meet with important officials from different high level organizations in the Portland area – and the fact that it would be taking place at the City Hall – was already enough to make me feel someone actually wants to listen. I was recently interviewed by a student at Multnomah University majoring in Intercultural Studies, who asked me, “What do you think we Americans can do to help you Micronesians?” My answer was to simply “listen.” Generally speaking on the broader scale, immigrants’ and refugees’ stories often go unheard and unnoticed. This sometimes makes us feel out of place and unwanted. We can get a job, make a living, and do what normal people do, but we will always feel disconnected from mainstream society.

The ENGAGE event last May 4th was truly a long awaited opportunity, especially for our small Pacific Islander communities, to finally voice our concerns and be heard. It was brief but it was enough to get the conversation going. There were important people from various organizations including Portland Metro, City of Portland, Multnomah County, Parks and Rec, Housing, Mayor’s Office, and more. It is indeed a great honor, and I am very humbled and privileged to have such important people come out – on a Saturday, on a beautiful and sunny day that could have been spent outdoors – to hear voices and concerns from our small communities. That event was a wonderful time of taking a small but important step towards the betterment of our small communities and the greater Portland community.

I have to admit that my “Chuukese-ness” probably held me back from speaking more freely and comfortably. I felt that I could have said more about our community but wasn’t sure if anyone wanted to hear what I had to say. However, some of the participants were surprised by what I did say about my community; at least, based on their facial expression. For example, I mentioned that the very first encounter between my ancestors and white people – about six centuries ago – already shaped my people’s perception of white culture as more dominant and superior to ours. We even have a term for people with white skin, “Rewon”, which literally means “people from up there” or “high people.” Because of the advanced technology that white people brought, our ancestors saw themselves as inferior. It’s always been like that ever since, and it even translates to how we live today back home, as well as here in Portland. “What good can we possibly bring to the table?” This sometimes even makes some of my people to deny their own culture and language. We need to be heard from where we are so that we can develop a positive cultural identity in this foreign country. I felt that I could not bring the information that the participants wanted to hear from our side so I did not talk much.

To sum up the experience, it was a great one, but there is still room for improvement. First of all, the social part (getting to know the people well and know why are interested in the meeting, etc.) was not as intimate as I anticipated. Our cultures are very relational and community-oriented, but that was not displayed as much during the event. Secondly, I thought we could have given the participants an opportunity to give us feedback, i.e. challenges that they see with our communities, what they would like to see us (IRCO) and our communities do, and what information they would like to know. I felt like we just brought a chunk of info to the people and left them to deal with it on their own. My point is to make this a two-way conversation where both sides bring something to the table. Finally, and I think the bottom-line problem to everything, was the fact that time was very limited. Three sessions, in addition to two main group meetings, were all cramped up into at least three ours. There is very little conversation going on. It was only presentation from our part and just little bits from the participants. To make this a more 'engaging' and interactive event I think the time would have helped if it was longer.

All in all, though time was limited for a genuine and more practical dialogue to really start moving, the event was a good baby-step towards the process of a healthier culturally and ethnically diverse community here in Portland. Again, the meeting encouraged me to continue to work for my community and with mainstream community to contribute to the overall wellbeing of the bigger Portland community. There is no greater joy than opening the doors for other people to begin to see my people where they are at and for my people to feel more welcomed to this great country and to be concerned and contributing members of society. It is always a blessing to be finally heard, but it is even a greater blessing when *we* (Micronesian communities and Portland communities) begin to *listen* to ourselves and to others in order to live together in harmony. I do hope ENGAGE 2013 was *loud* enough for people from both sides to "Hear Our Voices."