

Diversity and Civic Leadership Program

Year-end performance summary

FY 2008-09

July 2008 through June 2009

Organization: IRCO – Immigrant Refugee Community Organization

GOAL: Community Involvement, Increase the number and diversity of people who are involved and volunteer in their communities and neighborhoods.

1. Provide short narratives describing examples of how two to three individual participants in the training program are contributing to building the organizational capacity of their organizations and/or expanding their personal leadership skills.
 - Mardine Mao is an Engage leader and active with the Cambodian American Community Organization. She has become active with NW Neighbors Inc. She was a keynote speaker March 31 for a forum on community involvement.
2. Examples of developing culturally appropriate strategies to bring constituency together to build community identity, understanding of existing City governance structures, and/or skills to analyze City power dynamics.
 - **Primary organizing model:** Work with three primary immigrant/refugee community organizations:
 - APANO – Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
 - Slavic Coalition
 - Africa House Advisory Board
 - **Outreach and inter-group relations:** IRCO organizing model is to meet in locations most comfortable with community leaders such as at IRCO, Africa House, ethnic restaurants and cafes, religious houses, and in places familiar to them. At meetings make introductions and strong emphasis on building relationships, learning process around historical experiences, cultural trends, and a special effort around polite and respectful behaviors.
 - **Safety of immigrant/refugee teenagers:** worked with Police Bureau
 - **Gender specific swimming pool hours:** Worked with Parks and Recreation
 - **City employee recruitment and retention** of immigrants and refugee applicants: Worked with Human Resources
 - **Development of DCL program and budget process:** Worked with ONI
 - **Contract awards** from catering to construction for immigrant/refugee: Worked with Purchasing Bureau to improve opportunities.
 - **City vision effort:** Worked with Planning Bureau
 - **County Budget Forum:** Worked with other DCL groups on event at their facility, 375 attended.

- **City Speakers Project:** Developing speaker's bureau to raise the visibility of Immigrant /refugees and Communities of Color before City Council and improve the public speaking skills of our target populations.
- **Convening Burmese community:** The Burmese have had a sudden influx of hundreds of refugee families over the last 12 months. Their numbers have doubled in Portland. Different cultural identities within the Burmese community are present raising historic tensions. IRCO and APANO are working to bring Burmese leaders together to identify and address their needs collectively. Interpersonal working relationships are developing, and leaders understand how to effectively utilize City services to meet community needs.
- **Forum with City Commissioner staff and OMF:** Organized gathering with 24 participants with City commissioner and Office of Management and Finance staff.
- **Multi-Cultural Youth Basketball Tournament:** Discussing organizing summer basketball tournament with Chinese American Citizen's Association and Native American Youth Association, a family and community friendly event. Our plan includes reaching out to the local neighborhood associations for support.
- **Russian Speaking Network:** Engage graduates, affiliated with the broader Slavic Coalition of Oregon, have established a Russian leadership development and community organizing network focusing on bringing together Russian Speaking professionals in the community to provide peer support, pool resources, and prioritize opportunities for community engagement.
- **East Portland Action Plan:** Russian Speaking Network active on EPAP committee, met with Lore Wintergreen and Richard Bixby of the East Portland Neighborhood Office. East Portland is the primary area where the Russian Speaking community lives, and efforts at placing Russian Speaking leaders into Neighborhood Associations and community planning processes continues to address social isolation.
- **APANO:** Improving organizational development. Regular APANO Board meetings and membership meeting on June 13, 2009.
- **Asian Pacific Islander Urban Ecology Project:** City Vision Into Action grant to APANO to better engage the Asian and Pacific Islander communities around sustainability and green economy opportunities. Partnership between Hmong American Community of Oregon, Center for Diversity and the Environment, Organizing People Activating Leaders (OPAL), and APANO.
- **Colored Pencils Last Friday Art and Culture Night:** Ongoing multi-cultural arts event organized by IRCO and CIO leadership development participant. Has received in-kind support from both IRCO and CIO.
- **City Council candidates forums:** Culturally specific for African American, Native American, Latino and immigrant/refugee communities, which historically have had minimal participation in local candidate forum efforts with DCL partners.
- **Many Rivers Project Listening Circles:** Effort to better engage Asian/Pacific Islander communities in APANO and City public involvement efforts. IRCO staff providing leadership mentoring and technical assistance to APANO.
- **Somali Women's Association:** Lul Abdulle is a staff person and consultant with various neighborhood offices and groups for connecting with Somali community.
- Approximate value of leveraged grants and volunteer hours: \$127,100

3. Have you convened any gatherings/meetings or events to accomplish this goal/program function? If so, how many gatherings/meetings? Attendance?
 - 1st – 2nd Qtr: Inter-group: 1 convening, 33 participants. Community coalitions: 3 APANO mtgs (48 participants), 1 SCO/Slavic Coalition of Oregon (12 participants) and 1 ACCO/African (15 participants)
 - 2nd - 3rd Qtr: 6 events, 240 participants
 - 4th Qtr: 15 events and 200 participants

GOAL: Capacity Building, Strengthen neighborhood and community capacity to build identity, skills, relationships and partnerships.

Communications

4. Describe the methods of communication currently used to outreach to your group.
 - Email communications regularly sent to 300 key organizers and leaders
 - Updating database
 - New email and website for APANO – www.apano.org
 - Database framework established for Slavic Coalition of Oregon
 - Phone tree for IRCO Engage Graduates
 - IRCO community development listserve of community contacts
 - Monthly mailing for IRCO Engage Graduates
 - Colored Pencils Last Friday Art and Culture Night outreach
 - Access to Community Coalition Email Lists (APANO, Slavic Coalition, African Community)

5. How many people are receiving these communications on a regular basis?
 - 1st Qtr: IRCO community development listserve of community contacts – 1,000+. Weekly email updates to 90 Engage participants
 - 2nd Qtr: 550 unique individuals contacted at least once.
 - 3rd Qtr: 750 unique individuals contacted at least once.

6. Describe one example of how one of these communication strategies is supporting your community building and livability efforts, fostering dialogue on policy issues, or publicizing opportunities for involvement with the City?
 - **Leadership assessment:** Received surveys from 18 of 40 Engage '08 graduates re: interest areas and capacity for civic engagement. With those who indicated an interest in their local Neighborhood Associations, we are:
 1. Researching the dynamics, history and players in their specific Neighborhood Association
 2. Making contact and facilitating introductions between IRCO participant and

- Neighborhood Association leadership
3. Planning a follow up which may include a visit with IRCO staff and participant to a future Neighborhood Association meeting, debrief conversation with participant, and establishing a feedback loop with ONI District Coalition staff and Neighborhood Association leadership as appropriate.
7. Are there plans to develop/implement any new communications strategies?
- African Community E-News to outreach monthly to African community and allies.

Leadership development

8. As a result of this project describe one method to develop leadership opportunities for your constituents to become effective advocates on City public involvement initiatives and/or initiatives by your organization to achieve economic and social equity? How many people have participated? (Leadership Academy question): Provide a short narrative on how one or two trainings provided contributes to building the organizational capacity of participants' organizations and/or are building leadership skills of the participants?)
- **Convened Engage '09:** Six session (18 hours) cross-cultural leadership training program with Russian speaking/Slavic, African and Asian/Pacific Islander immigrant/refugee communities. 41 people graduated including a ceremony with Mayor Potter. Curriculum prepared by IRCO staff and partner organizations, generally adapting materials for use with a more diverse population and sensitive to the experiences and needs of immigrants and refugees. Workshops included:
 - Building community identity
 - Understanding of City governance structure
 - Skills to analyze City power dynamics
 - Facilitation and project planning
 - Representation on City advisory committees
 - **Facilitation trainings:** Part of APANO's Many Rivers Project Listening Circles project. See above.
 - **Leadership Assessment:** Received surveys from 18 of 39 Engage '08 graduates assessing interests in civic life, asked them to articulate their vision, and highlighted their experience and expertise. Our next steps are:
 1. Individual meetings with graduates;
 2. Communication and networking with targeted City Boards and Commissions;
 3. Meet and greet opportunity with individuals or full civic group that is being targeted;
 4. Technical support in application process for civic leadership position;
 5. Follow up protocol that includes debrief, information sharing and problem solving around issues such as translation, orientation, inter-personal dynamics, skill building.

Partnerships and Collaborations

9. Describe a new or update on a collaboration or partnership developed as a result of this project with other community organization(s), neighborhood and/or business association(s) where there may be opportunities to work on common community and neighborhood livability issues?

- Multnomah County - budget forum
- Chinese American Citizen's Association and NAYA – basketball tournament
- Hmong American Community of Oregon - API Urban Ecology Project
- Center for Diversity and the Environment - API Urban Ecology Project
- Organizing People Activating Leaders (OPAL) - API Urban Ecology Project
- APANO - API Urban Ecology Project
- Russian Speaking Network
- Slavic Coalition of Oregon
- Somali Women's Association
- Other DCL organizations – City Council candidates forum
- Police Bureau – safety of teens
- Parks and Recreation – gender specific swimming pool hours
- Human Resources – hiring and retention
- Office of Neighborhood Involvement – BAC
- Purchasing Bureau – contracting
- Planning Bureau – City visioning
- East Portland Action Plan

GOAL: Public Impact, Increase community and neighborhood impact on public decisions.

Representation on City advisory committees

10. How many people have participated on city advisory committees, boards, commissions?

- 7 IRCO constituents on City boards and commissions including, but not limited to:
 - Housing and Community Development Commission
 - Public Involvement Advisory Council (ONI) - Sonny Tan, Engage graduate
 - City RFP for homeless services grants – Hongsa Chanthavong
 - Lul Abdulle is a staff person and consultant with various neighborhood offices and groups for connecting with Somali community.
- 45 people in 2nd quarter.
- 50 people in 4th Qtr.

Culturally appropriate public involvement models

11. Please describe any opportunities this quarter you have had to engage with City public involvement efforts. What have been some of the successes or challenges in engaging in this process?

- We are planning on a Russian-Language orientation to the Office of Neighborhood Involvement.
- Culturally appropriate strategies are Accountability and Grassroots Empowerment. An analysis of accountability has sharpened our effort to identify, facilitate and mobilize Burmese leaders from key stakeholder groups - churches, youth, professionals, and elders. Grassroots Empowerment focuses our effort on cultivating leadership internally within the community and developing their skills and confidence in articulating and addressing their community issues.
- We have met with a dozen City public involvement staff with the assistance of Afifa Ahmed-Shafi. We are working with Afifa to receive consistent and periodic updates of vacant positions that we can recruit our Engage participants to apply for.
- Recommend openings on City Boards and Commissions be tracked and circulated periodically by electronic mail, and that we continue to discuss and focus criteria for serving in a way that encourages more participation from our target populations.