

QUESTION STARTERS – Friday, February 24.

March 8, 2012 notes

Underlined items received extra stars/checks.

OCL Study launch

WHAT DRAWS YOU TO THIS INQUIRY?

Wondering how do people get to Syracuse?

Seen Utica – intrigued by community engagement.

Wondering how my organization plays a role? Add solutions.

Get support to maximize efforts.

Want to know more (be educated on this issue)

Believe we can do better and want to make that happen (overcome barriers)

Participate in creating the solutions

Better capture, recognize and promote ability and success (potential) of refugees

Wondering how do we maximize efforts (volunteer, programming) via pooled information and better opportunity for dissemination? Create sustainability of effort.

Wondering what people are told before they come here?

Wondering who will be the local liaison with Governor's new department of immigrant services.

Wondering if faith based organizations are the best to serve this population.

Wondering if local electeds and gov't really understand issue?

Particular needs (gaps in services) re: blind/visually impaired refugees (exacerbated difficulties) esp. re: literacy and jobs.

Wondering how libraries can best serve refugees

Wondering how can we connect better? Integrate.

Wondering how can agencies coordinate better?

Wondering – can resettlement agencies reach out more? (Consider more input)

Wondering – are our limited \$\$\$ being spent efficiently? (Cross-community?)

Wondering if anyone is examining public policy? (E.g. disconnects in funding ((literacy, workforce))

How do we keep better pathways and supports to keep volunteers engaged long term.

What is potential for a central focal point of programming/agency efforts, and if not possible here, how do we get same benefits?

How can gov't (city, state, county) modernize to be a better service delivery agent for education, health, literacy, safety, etc.?

To make sure truth and facts be known.

Want to find ways for community to access refugees / get to know intimately.

Want to educate public on efficiencies and results of our model.

Want to improve education (literacy) of older students. Delve into problem.

Wondering where we will get to hear voices of refugees themselves.

Can we provide opportunities for refugee families to "settle again" in suburbs or rural areas?

Can we figure out ways to keep refugees IN the city as home and property owners, rebuilding a crumbling base?

I want them to be productive members of the community and city

Help community see refugees as assets. Neighborhood meet/greet/support groups.

How to avoid pitting immigrants and other disenfranchised people against refugees.

How we can empower and familiarize refugee community groups.

Drawn to create a best practices community to serve refugees and integrate them well for their own benefit and the benefit of the community.

What assumptions do we need to test or challenge in thinking about refugees in our community?

Challenge – they are homogenous, both as refugees in total, or in groups.

Challenge – they are uneducated.

Challenge assumption that they are drain, that they don't contribute. Test – is this specific to African-Americans?

Test – is the best way to educate kids to put them in their age group? Ask whether state requirement that must learn English in **less than** one year is workable.

Challenge assumption – all refugees learn enough English at RAP.

Test – do refugees from same country WANT to live integrated together?

Challenge assumption – English needs are not the same for all refugees. Not one size fits all.

Test – do all refugees want to learn English? How easy is this?

Test – are certain refugee groups more entrepreneurial?

Avoiding stereotyping.

Test – does everyone need a college education? Are there other jobs?

Understand family structures are different; understand cultural differences (big plus for people).
Understand teen issues like date rape.

Test – how is refugee population affecting our schools?

Test – will families take care of their own? Are they following family to come here?

Understand that women are 2nd class citizens (but not their daughters.)

Test – Did/do men lose their role when they come here?

Test – adults with disabilities – do we have enough services.

Test – what are the health needs, services?

Test – pre-literate versus already educated. What are the different skill levels?

Challenge assumption that they are all starting from the same place.

Challenge assumption – life is better here, so they should be grateful.

Test – what are they used to in terms of financial exchanges, e.g. need to barter

Test – is African-American community as welcoming? What does this mean in schools?

Test – the “warehousing” in certain areas. Is it by choice or necessity?

Challenge assumption – Somali does not equal pirate.

Test – are too many coming in? What about secondary migration?

Challenge assumption that refugees are dirty not clean.

Test – what are levels of skill? Differences between countries?

Assumption – do all refugees honor American work ethics? (Not monolithic)

Assumptions – all refugees want big families.

Assumptions – not all refugees ready to become immediate contributors to economy – eventually perhaps.

Test – conflict: “you’re taking mine.”

How much money came here because of the refugees (Fed, Economy, and Tax?)

Assumption: refugee progress comes at expense of others?

Test: refugees need to change to be successful.

Will neighbors open welcome and encourage refugees to be a part of their established neighborhoods?

False assumption: the majority of refugees are not being adequately helped – that are brought here and then “abandoned.”

Challenge the assumption that people who resettle refugees are making a lot of money off the refugee system.

Do refugees want to be integrated into community? If so, how far?

Will refugee families do just fine/better without altering our systems of support (i.e. do we need to adjust, not them?)

Test: without English proficiency, refugees can’t really be helped.

What questions, if answered, could make a difference in the refugee dynamic in our community?

What do refugees themselves consider their strengths?

Can we encourage them to assert their rights as US residents, while appreciating cultural differences?

What support do refugees receive now and for how long?

What are refugees told by State Department before arriving?

How can we individualize the groups?

What are their experiences since they arrive?

What is the difference between refugee and immigrant?

What are the numbers?

What is the ethnic/religious makeup?

Is consolidation of service providers possible?

Are limited \$\$\$ spent most efficiently?

Is it possible to put 10-17 year olds together in schools? Or is there a way to better integrate students in schools, addressing language and cultural issues?

Is segregation positive or negative?

Is there sufficient cultural competency education in place for those working with refugees?

How can we recognize the differences between refugees so we can better appreciate, understand, interact (shop, eat)?

What is home country status of refugees with disabilities? How does it affect their ability to obtain services?

How does home country status of women affect "assimilation" and how does it affect provision of services, e.g. SPD?

Re: economic development – how do cultural differences help or hinder entrepreneurship? Do we need to adapt our practices/expectations?

How do people get here? What is the process? Why? [Do they want to be here?](#) [Were there options?](#)

What are the English language skills of people when they arrive? [What services are available?](#)

How much assimilation do refugees want?

What affect to the unsavory elements of our society have on the refugees? Are kids drawn to the streets? Does this create racist feelings toward lower socio-economic Americans?

Is it possible to articulate the longer terms needs of refugees? Government help is mostly short term.

Will the community take time to learn my culture, my community, my religion – why should I be the different one?

Is it possible to articulate the longer term needs of refugees – gov't help is mostly short term?

What can our community do to reach out to refugees?

How do we strengthen literacy skills for refugees?

Can we educate refugees before they get there? – can it be region specific as to U.S. customs, laws, weather?

How can we build community understanding and compassion for what it has taken for a refugee to survive, get here, and start/make a new life?

How can CNY continue to be a welcoming new home in the face of an economic downturn?

How can we effectively address inter and intra-ethnic conflicts, some of which are generations long, to help with long term integration of refugees?

What can our community reasonably handle?

What do we need to learn to understand dilemmas/opportunities in being a refugee community?

Dilemma: sexual attitudes and behaviors. Gender politics from cultural point of view (date rape, teen pregnancy)

What are the trained work backgrounds of refugees? Can we “fit” them better?

What are challenges to the community – their receptiveness to diversity, refugees?

Look at companies who have employed large numbers of refugees. Same with landlords. Ask 1) what were the challenges? How overcome? 2) Why keep doing it? Love the refugees?”

What other communities have been successful, how did they do it, what did they do?

Look at issues around food – it’s an opportunity that CNY has not taken up. Ethnic restaurants, community gardens.

What are the impacts on our health system?

What is the level of education?

Cultural mores and differences of various groups.

Subgroups within groups.

Understand history/existence of tribal conflicts. [Also accomplishments and contributions.](#)

What are the impacts of hosting such a large group of refugees?

Data on success in school – varies by age; prior literacy.

How long does it take adult refugees to get self-sufficient (language, employment, community function?)

How do we support those who do not come to CNY with a sponsoring church/community? How can we replicate what the sponsor does?

[How many come without support from other communities?](#)

Do we have micro-finance opportunities for refugees – connect with Southside Initiative.

Do we have/provide interpreting services?

Is there a housing office for refugees?

[Assistance with accessing systems – criminal justice, social services, legal, women, etc.](#)

[What are the resettlement agencies responsibility and services; and what are the reasonable expectations they can ask of other social/cultural/economic services to make resettlement and integration of refugees go well?](#)

[What is doing what and what are the gaps? Are there overlaps/duplication in programs?](#)

[How does the global-political situation affect resettlement and affect our community?](#)

When Syracuse agreed to be a refugee city what was involved and what was the commitment? Are our key leaders still committed?

How do Canada and Australia requirements differ?

Why are there refugees and what is the world's responsibility to them? Is US policy abroad responsible for creating refugees?

Is returning "home" a goal/dream/desire?

Listen to refugee success stories.