Preparing faculty and students to engage with refugee communities

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Agenda and Goals

• Why is this important?

• Where and when is this important?

• What do we do about it? How?
  ◦ Strategies and tools we have developed
  ◦ How might you use these resources?
What we all want vs. what we see now

Goal: Globally informed citizens! Two stories.

• Where/how might [native born] students be encountering people who arrived as refugees? (specific to your organization)

• What preconceptions might native born students have about refugees?

• What issues might arise if native-born students are encountering refugees but are unprepared?
So... what do we need to do?

- What?
- How?
- What have you tried... with success?
- Do you have tips to offer?
- Here is what we have tried....
Refugee Collaboration Team

Boise State University faculty/staff & community resettlement workers

Why

• Knowledge of refugee resettlement
• Address stereotypes, move toward strengths-based orientation
• Seek input for mutually beneficial opportunities
• Create a more welcoming community
Refugee Collaboration Team

How?

• 5 Areas:
  ◦ Experiential Education
  ◦ Research
  ◦ Curriculum Integration
  ◦ Refugee Student Resources
  ◦ Conference & Training Opportunities

• Refugee Studies Minor

• Idaho Conference on Refugees

• Developed resources
  ◦ Tip Sheets
  ◦ Workshops for faculty/staff
  ◦ Book discussion with reflection questions
  ◦ Speaker events
  ◦ Half the World book
Changing with the times

With decreasing arrival numbers, how do we help faculty prepare students to:

• Interact appropriately with refugee community
• Build empathy
Team Brainstorm

• Content
  o Self-reflection
  o Strengths-based orientation
  o Refugee resettlement processes and facts
  o Ethical engagement with diverse communities
  o The refugee emotional/personal experience

• Class activities

• How to deliver the content (get buy-in!)
Conference Brainstorm

• Friendship partnering
• Tutoring and mentoring
• Helping at cultural events
• Working at parent events
• Meeting with teens to talk about college
• Promoting refugee-owned/supportive businesses
• “Tour guide” on arrival
Activity

• Individual
  o Review tip sheet & empathy steps document
    o What tips could you use from these guides to prepare your staff and students for working with refugees?

• Discuss at your table

• Share with group
Lessons Learned

• Involve community partners with all planning, but be sensitive to their constraints

• Ensure there is refugee voice in your partnerships, events, and in your planning and outreach

• Get faculty buy-in

• Collaborate with other campus programs and priorities to raise the visibility of the need and opportunities for working with refugee communities

• Teach thyself – are all learning and blundering, so be patient but diligent respecting others