



Co- Chairs: Linette Escobar & Eva Iraheta
Secretary: Cristy Dieterich

SF-CAIRS Meeting

Wednesday, May 9th 2012 – 12:15 pm– 1:45pm

Host:

Welcome & Introductions – *Linette Escobar, Eva Iraheta, Cristy Dieterich, Daisy Reyes, Elena Zlobina, Suyen Figueroa, Nate Dunstan, Katherine Meyer, Audra Brown, Jacqueline Espana, Yonas Woldeab, Nora Goodfriend-Koven, Hyun-mi Kim*

Highlights from March 11, 2012 Meeting – MEDA Tax Program for log-income filers.
Guest Panel: Mental Health Services & Referrals - Survivors International, UCSF Trauma Recovery Center provides mental health and agency trainings including dealing with vicarious trauma.
Christina Shea – RAMS, Inc. (Richmond Area Multi-Services) – various mental health programs, Communication Tips when talking about mental health services for your clients.

**** Special Topics: Refugee Awareness Month, Press release from SF-CAIRS**

- This June celebrates 2 decades that the Ca Dept. of Social Services (CDSS) has promoted Refugee Awareness Month. The CDSS Refugee Programs Bureau will publish agency events and activities on their website: www.cdss.ca.gov/refugeeprogram Send info to Alexandria.Arredondo@dss.ca.gov.
- On **June 20, SF-CAIRS member Arriba Juntos will host a Refugee Awareness event** again. Last year's event was a great success! The flyer and more information on how to participate will be sent to the group.
- APILO will arrange to provide a legal consultation workshop and will look into providing a volunteer with NHP staff as interpreters.

Community Profile: Eritrean Youth for Change (EYC), Yonas Woldeab yonwol@yahoo.com
Yonas Woldeab, (Water Resource Manger) – was granted asylum in the US in 2010 after completing university study in Germany. EYC helped him and now Yonas volunteers with EYC.
Yonas provided a very informative presentation including Eritrean history and geography as well as immigration push and pull factors and EYC services. The Eritrean population is 5 million with considerable amount of the population living abroad. Eritreans are the 3rd largest refugee community in east bay.

Eritrean immigration push factors include: Human rights violations, Restrictions/bans to religious freedom, lack of economic opportunities, mandatory military 1-2 year national service was extended to up to 15 years (since 1995). Many Eritrean immigrant youth in the US have left because of extended military service, often including detainment, torture, inhumane treatment.

Eritrean immigration pull factors include: Human rights, economic and educational opportunity, pressure to provide for family: go abroad to work and send back money. 1800 Eritrean are escaping monthly, 50,000 refugees were housed in camps in Ethiopia.

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Share info and resources by sending an email to the group at:

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Common immigration routes are via Sudan (residing in refugee camps to apply for status), crossing desert, Libya, Mediterranean, many stops along the way to destination countries including Scandinavia, EU, US, Canada, Australia, Gulf States.

Bay Area: accurate population stats are unknown

Challenges for Eritreans in the Bay Area: social-cultural assimilation, language barrier, lack of economic and education opportunities, access to health services, basic legal orientation, fear of family persecution back home and on route. Any application for refugee or asylum status is considered a crime in Eritrea resulting in detainment and fines and puts family back home at risk. As a result of this fear, assistance is provided in secret because of possible informants.

Eritrean Youth for Change (EYC) started in 2008 as a result of shared experiences and the community assistance that was happening anyway. These activities became formalized through EYC, whose aim is to assist the Eritrean community and provide support to those recently immigrated to the US and specifically the Bay Area.

EYC Goals and Activities:

- EYC is voluntary based and has a goal to fund a paid position
- Monitoring sessions
- Interpreter services
- Court assistance
- Resume writing and job search assistance
- Aid to victims of human trafficking and those who are detained
- Organize fundraisers, seminars, cultural get together, demonstrations
- Push for constitutionalism in Eritrea
- Collecting data - lack of statistics limits access to resources.

Expect more Eritreans to come to the Bay Area – the flora and climate feels like home!

EYC is an independent, non-profit and non-partisan civic organization founded in 2008 by Eritreans residing in the Bay Area. It aims to utilize all legitimate and peaceful measures of public empowerment and awareness to support and advocate for constitutionalism governance in Eritrea. In addition, EYC provides the necessary support and advocates on behalf of Eritrean immigrants especially those who have recently immigrated to the United States and more specifically to the Bay Area.

***Focus on Solutions - LEN Institute video**

<http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/video?id=8602451&syndicate=syndicate§ion=>

Discussion Items:

*SF-CAIRS Website sneak peak premiere – *Elena Zlobina* <http://www.sf-cairs.org/>

**** Agency updates, current initiatives, events, announcements etc.**

- Nora Goodfriend-Koven – While on sabbatical from City College, Nora worked on an interpreter curriculum for dealing with vicarious trauma for interpreters of mental health and trauma services. She is looking for participants to be part of 3-day pilot session taking place in Maryland and possibly next year the session will come to the Bay Area.

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- Audra Brown - IRC is introducing a new health access program. New Roots programs started with community gardens and launched in N.Cal Anyone with agricultural backgrounds is needed to help.
- Newcomers Health Program: Anti-Human Trafficking trainings available at your site. Recommended for anyone working with vulnerable populations. Contact Cristy 415-581-2479
- SUNSET – Continuing work on policies for smoke-free housing. Staff can come out to site to speak with property managers. Contact Linette or Olga Radom for more info: lescobar@bacr.org 415-682-1963. oradom@bacr.org 415-682-1972.

Meeting Evaluation

Next meeting: **Wednesday, July 11th 2012 – 12:15pm– 1:45pm**

SFCAIRS Meeting Evaluation:

San Francisco Coalition for Asylee, Immigrant and Refugee Services

Meeting Date: 5/9/12

Format	N= 8			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The time of the meeting was convenient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 (50%)	4 (50%)
The location of the meeting was convenient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5 (63%)	3 (37%)
The length of the meeting was appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	1(12%)	3(37%)	4(50%)
Time was used efficiently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	1(12%)	3(37%)	4(50%)

* What topics or panel would you like to see presented for future meetings? (If you know of a speaker on a specific topic, please provide the speaker’s name and contact information if possible.)

- Homeless Prenatal (18th & Potrero)
- The impact of S-Com (Secure Communities) on refugee and asylee populations
- Mongolian community needs

* Are there other community partners or agencies who could add to the work of SF CAIRS?
If yes, who?

- Year round Free Tax Clinic, then also help people to get numbers, etc.

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* What did you enjoy most about today's meeting?

- Eritran Presentation and the Refugee Awareness info
- Yonas's presentation was incredible. I was so happy to learn about what is going on in Eritrea from his perspective.
- The presentation on Eritrea
- Group sharing initiatives, events, opportunities for partnership
- Eritrean Youth speaker
- Eritrean - very interesting
- Presentation about Eritrea.
- Agencies sharing their news.

Please share any additional comments:

- Thank you!
- Would have like to hear more about L.E.N but understand why it was brief.



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