**Minutes of the San Diego Refugee Forum Meeting**

**Date**: Tuesday, August 17, 2021

**Location**: Zoom meeting

**Time**: 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Attendees:**

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| Abdi Abdillahi, SD County Refugee Coordinator |
| Afrah Abdulkader, IRC Survivor Advocate |
| Alexis Burnstan, UCSD TASET Project |
| Ann Vilmenay, COSD-HHSA-BHS-AOA |
| Anne Fosselman, El Cajon Valley HS Community Center |
| Avonne Pace, A Better Life Together |
| Awichu Akwanya, UWomen East Africa, SDRF Chair |
| Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary |
| Bowa Tucker, Office of Refugee Resettlement, SF |
| Brittney Ochira, National Conflict Resolution Cent |
| Carol Crisp, PCG |
| Carol Lewis, El Cajon Collaborative |
| Casey Myers Doane, One Digital World |
| Christina Ames-Cotto, McAlister Institute – East Teen Recovery Center |
| Claire Enemark, SDRCC/UWEAST |
| Claudia Ochoa |
| Cynthia To, SD County Community Health |
| Dalia Mohammad, License to Freedom |
| Damaris Garduno, Miramar College |
| Daria Tomsky, IRC |
| David Schupack, Bridge Builders Network |
| Elena Klein, JFS Resettlement |
| Farhat Popal, City SD Immigrant Affairs Mgr |
| Giselle Barajas, Jewish Family Service, Resettlement |
| Graciela Mendoza, CA Dept. of Public Health, Binational Border Health |
| Hassan Abdirahman., Somali Family Service |
| Hawi Abdulkadir, Somali Family Service |
| Irene Elizabeth Garcia, SD Co Child Lead Prevention |
| Jan Jarrell, SD College of Continuing Ed |
| Jane Register, World Relief SoCal |
| Juan Estrada, Molina Healthcare, Community Engagement |
| Judy Amaro, PCG Central |
| Katie Trist, A Better Life Together, BRIDGE Project |
| Kim Thomas, American Academy of Pediatrics |
| Lauren Kocher, CA Refugee Programs Bureau |
| Lauren Mapp, SD Union Tribune |
| Lenda Hanna, SD County Off. Refugee Coord., Immigrant and Refugee Affairs |
| Lily Mojdehi, Breaking Down Barriers, Jewish Family Service |
| Lucia Gonzales, SAY San Diego, Crawford |
| Lucy Jasso, San Diego Youth Services |
| Maggie Santibanez |
| Mander |
| Mejgan Afshan, Borderlands for Equity, SDRF Treasurer |
| Melissa Casanova, Home Start, First 5 First Steps |
| Michael Serban, FACE Dept., Cajon Valley Schools |
| Michele Einspar, SD Unified School District |
| Mohammad Sarferaz, Cajon Valley Schools |
| Mu Aye, Karen Organization |
| Nadia Moshirian Binderup, Sheriff's Dept. |
| Nazira Adieva |
| Osvaldo Alcazar Pulido, United Health Care |
| Prisci Quijada, Refugee Health Coordinator, SDCHHS |
| Renee Nasori, Grossmont College |
| Rita Shamoon, CALWORKS job developer |
| Roberta Krauss, SD Continuing Ed CalWORKs |
| Ross Fackrell, IRC, SDRF Vice Chair |
| Vernita Gutierrez, Planned Parenthood Pacific SW |
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**Meeting facilitator**: Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair

**1. Greetings and introduction of attendees** Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair

58 attending, including 8 new in 2021

**2. Treasurer’s report** Mejgan Afshan

*Note: 1. The correct number of paid members as of August 17 is 21, not 40.*

*2. The total of 19 stated later by Bob Walsh is the total of paid members eligible to participate in the vote for approval of the Bylaws. See (5) below.*

**3. Resettlement updates**  Abdi Abdillahi, County Refugee Coordinator

**County Refugee Coordinator report**

Haitians continue to make up the majority of arrivals in San Diego County. For July 2021 arrivals, 158 out of the total 255 (62%) are from Haiti. The remainder were from Afghanistan (71, 28%), Cuba (10), Democratic Republic of Congo (8), Cameroon (3), Iraq (3), Ethiopia (1) and Vietnam (1). The Haitian trend is expected to continue for the remainder of the current FFY until we see refugee arrivals from overseas pick up.

For the current FFY 20-21 (October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021), 772 out of the total 1,087 (71%) of the San Diego County arrivals are from Haiti; 16% are from Afghanistan and 5% from Cuba. 76% were Cubans and Haitians; 12% were primary refugees; and 11% were SIV. For more details, see the County Arrivals Report uploaded on the SDRF website.

**Resettlement agency reports**

Alliance for African Assistance – not in attendance

Catholic Charities – not in attendance

Jewish Family Service

41 arrivals scheduled for August: Afghan SIVs; refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq

IRC

July: 21 arrivals, refugees Democratic Republic of the Congo and SIV Afghanistan.

August: Syrian refugees coming, don’t yet know the numbers.

September: Arrivals anticipated from South Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan.

**4. Task force update** Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary

Advocacy

Needs members

Asylum

Casey Myers Doane reports:

* Title 42 is preventing seeking asylum at the border. A workaround is the ACLU helping groups arrange for humanitarian parole. No border applications for asylum at this time.
* Nationwide there have been 1.3 million asylum applications, with 199,000 in California, 11,000 in San Diego County.
* Migrant shelters are experiencing COVID infections, some are shutting down. Not able to cross border to help with asylum.

Domestic Violence

Dalia Mohammad reports:

* The next meeting is scheduled for Sep. 2 at 12:30.
* There is a desire for getting community members involved in Domestic violence training.

Education

Lucia Gonzales reports:

* SAY San Diego - Teen Leadership Connections Camp at Serra and Crawford - Crawford Community Connection Level up Camp August 2021 <http://bit.ly/TeenLeadershipConnections-S1>
* San Diego Unified - In partnership with CalSOAP, District counselors have been calling and emailing recent graduates to check in with them on post-secondary planning and offer and support for college enrollment and/or financial aid.
* School will start Monday, August 30th. Currently school will be in-person, 5 days a week following all mask guidelines. A virtual Academy was offered to families as another option.https://www.sandiegounified.org/covid-19\_status https://www.sandiegounified.org/departments/neighborhood\_schools\_and\_enrollment\_options
* Next Meeting September 13th

Employment

Renee Nasori and Carol Crisp made a special presentation on the survey they have put out to identify refugees’ employment needs and related information. It is to be filled out by refugees themselves, it is anonymous, and it is available in English, Arabic and Spanish. The results of the survey will help the Employment Task Force plan employer events like job fairs.

The survey asks about:

- Career interests

- Basic life needs

- Educational background and plans

- Desire for employment, training

- English ability

The survey has been disseminated to the Forum email group. Your assistance is requested in getting refugees to fill it out.

Health

Cynthia To reports:

- Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 19.

- They are looking for a co-chair.

Mental Health

Claire Enemark reported there was no meeting this month.

**5. Agenda item:**  Vote on revision of SDRF Bylaws Bob Walsh, SDRF Secretary

A vote on the revision of the SDRF Bylaws was held. There were 19 paid members present at the meeting who were eligible to vote. Of the current total of 21 paid members, two members who joined recently were not eligible to vote because, according to the bylaws in effect at the time of the vote, members needed to have paid at least two months prior to the vote in order to participate in the voting.

Vote totals:

* 12 of 19 members were present at the meeting, representing a required majority. All voted to approve the new bylaws.
* According to the bylaws, organizations have 2 votes, individual members 1. Taking this into consideration, the vote tally was 22 of a possible total of 35 (10 organizations, 2 individuals out of total 16 organizations, 3 individuals).
* 2 additional votes were received by email – 1 organization and 1 individual. This makes for a vote total of 25 out of 38.
* By all counts, the new bylaws stand approved. They take effect immediately. They have been posted on the SDRF website.

**6. Presentation:**  School updates School district representatives

Representatives from a number of local school districts – K-12 and adult – presented a brief update on the opening of classes for the fall term. They included:

• San Diego City Schools (San Diego Unified)

• San Diego College of Continuing Education (Adult Education)

• Cajon Valley School District

• El Cajon High School

• Grossmont College and Career Tech Education/ Workforce Development

**Michele Einspar, Office of Children and Youth in Transition, San Diego Unified School District** <<https://sites.google.com/sandi.net/cyt/cyt>>

* The school district is working with refugee resettlement agencies in regard to refugee children.

<https://sites.google.com/sandi.net/cyt/students-we-serve/refugee>

* They have been impacted by the pandemic.
* School sites have upgraded their air filtration systems.
* Facemasks are required for in-person learning.
* The governor has required a mandate that employees must be fully vaccinated or test regularly.
* Each school determines the student age for restrictions.

<https://sandiegounified.org/covid-19_status>

* San Diego Unified is planning for a full return to full day in-person learning, five days per week, for the next school year beginning in August 2021. For students and families with sensitive medical conditions who choose to remain at home, classes will also be offered online to accommodate those safety needs.
* Every school has completed a reopening safety checklist which details the procedures and equipment put in place on each campus, including handwashing stations and sanitizer, hygiene practices for students and staff, and steps taken to ensure adequate ventilation in classrooms.
* School days will be modified to accommodate social-distancing and safety protocols, and students will continue with some online learning. For families not comfortable sending their children back to campuses, a fully online option will continue to be available. All families will be asked to complete a survey designed to gauge their preferences for returning their students to in-person classroom instruction, and will begin receiving information from schools shortly.

**Jan Jarrell, San Diego College of Continuing Education (Adult Education)**

RE-OPENING PLANS

Starting the week of August 23rd, main SDCCE campuses will be open for services these dates/times:

• Tuesdays 9:00-6:00

• Wednesdays 8:00-5:00

Starting the week of September 7th, days and hours will be increased:

• Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:00-5:00

• Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00-6:00

Note: Campuses may be open additional hours – this is the common schedule for all sites.

CLASSES

• Approximately 75% of SDCCE’s classes will be online.

• Online – fully online with no set meeting times

• Online Synch – fully online with set meeting times (on Zoom)

• Hybrid – Combination of online and in-person; Required on-campus meetings

• Hyflex – Combination of online and in-person; Optional on-campus meetings

• On-Campus – Vaccines are required for on-campus classes.

FALL 2021 class schedules coming soon! – will be mailed out

CORE ESL CLASSES

Seven levels of general ESL (listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary)

• Beginning (3 levels)

Levels 1 & 2 - HyFlex (Optional On-Campus Meetings)

Mid-City, ECC, Cesar Chavez Campuses

• Intermediate (2 levels) -- Fully online

• Advanced (2 levels + Transition to College) -- Fully online

CORE CLASSES

• Five levels of Pre-Vocational ESL: Beginning Low, Beg High, Intermediate Low, Int High, Advanced

• Course A focuses on Career Exploration & Job Search

• Course B focuses on Workplace Communication

CITIZENSHIP & SPECIAL TOPICS

• ESL + Citizenship (multi-level, high beginning through advanced)

• Special Topics (beginning, intermediate, advanced): Conversation, Pronunciation, Grammar, Reading

ESL SPECIAL FOCUS CLASSES

Career Pathways Advanced VESL: Business focus classes; Health careers; Sewing and Fashion; Child Dev.

ENROLLMENT / REGISTRATION

• Visit our webpage: www.sdcce.edu/esl

• Contact us: email: ESLsdce@sdccd.edu

• Multilingual Help Desk: <https://sdce.edu/esl/registration-information#eslhelp>

• On-campus ESL registration is taking place at the Mid-City campus via appointment. Call the multilingual help desk (link above) or Mid-City campus to sign up.

Mid-City Campus, 3792 Fairmount Ave., SD 92105, 619-388-4500

**Renee Nasori and Dr. Javier Ayala, Grossmont College Career Services**

* Grossmont College is open! First day of fall classes was August 16th. Students are welcome to apply and enroll for fall semester through August 27th.
* 70% of classes are online, 30% in person. COVID-19 vaccine is required for in-person classes, otherwise students are encouraged to take online classes. Masks are required if you’re on campus.
* The school is partnering with SD County and St. Paul’s on a vaccine clinic.
* Student Services is open both in-person and virtually via zoom. Appointments are highly recommended prior to coming in. We will continue to practice social distancing for everyone’s safety.
* Pilot with Office of Education to educate teachers of child development, teacher education in general.
* Offering new programs in cyber security, culinary arts, forensics, criminal justice.

ADMISSIONS

<https://www.grossmont.edu/admissions/index.php>

CAREER SERVICES AND VIRTUAL FRONT DESK (HELP LINE)

<https://www.grossmont.edu/student-support/career-center/index.php>

RECESSION-RESILIENT JOBS

<https://www.grossmont.edu/why-choose-grossmont/resilient-jobs/index.php>

CAREER SERVICES AND VIRTUAL FRONT DESK (Help Line)

<https://www.grossmont.edu/student-support/career-center/index.php>

**Michael Serban, Cajon Valley Union School District**

CVUSD – School starts 8/17/21

[Cajon Valley Union School District](https://www.cajonvalley.net/)

In-person Summer School was outstanding!

[Cajon Valley Career Centers Started this Summer](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjmKHhC361A)

All schools are open to in-person learning.

All COVID safety protocols are in place.

Masks required at all K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status. Masks optional outside of class.

[Home School - Design Learning Academy](https://www.cajonvalley.net/homeschool)

An Independent Study option is offered. (Parent focused support)

[K-8 Virtual School](https://www.cajonvalley.net/homeschool)

An Independent Study option is offered. (Teacher focused support)

**Anne Fosselman, Coordinator of the El Cajon Valley High School Community Center**

School started August 10th. Masks are required for ALL indoors, not required when outside but still encouraged to wear them. We offered two sessions of in person summer school. We now have a Counselor on Special Assignment that will focus on reengaging students. The community center offers mental health services through San Diego Youth Services to support our students. The community center is committed to helping meet the basic needs of our families through a food pantry, personal care kits, housing referrals, and more!

***The Forum will send a special email containing this update to our mail group by Friday, August 20.***

**6. Community Announcements**

Dalia Mohammad, License to Freedom

LTF has scheduled a vaccination drive for Saturday, Aug. 28.

Carol Lewis, El Cajon Collaborative

The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System is introducing a new fare system PRONTO to replace the Compass Cards. Rides on PRONTO will be free for the entire month of September.

<https://www.sdmts.com/fares-passes/pronto-fare-system>

Mejghan Afshan, Borderlands for Equity

There will be a candlelight vigil Aug. 19, 6:30 p.m. Bea Evenson Fountain in Balboa Park for a peaceful transition in Afghanistan and to show support for the Afghan community in San Diego.

Claire Enemark, SDRCC (San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition)/UWEAST

CalHOPE Community Support Line 1-888-222-0980 is available for anonymous connection for emotional support in relation to the Afghanistan crisis.

CalHOPE Community Support Line 1-888-222-0980 - You can call to speak anonymously and be connected directly with our Community Support Navigators in 18 languages (Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Dinka, English, Farsi, French, Haitian Kreyol, Karen, Kizigua, Kirundi, Kurdish, Nuer, Oromo, Pashto, Somali, Swahili, Tigrinya).

Lauren Mapp, San Diego Union-Tribune reporter

Lauren is working on a refugee cookbook project and helping Kate Morrissey with this week’s coverage of SIVs coming from Afghanistan. She will be sharing details on her cookbook project. Lauren.mapp@sduniontribune.com 619-922-3945

Graciela Mendoza, CA Dept. of Public Health, Binational Border Health

Asylum Seeker Health Services are available. graciela.mendoza@cdph.ca.gov

Avonne Pace, A Better Life Together

apace@abetterlifetogether.org We help individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities receive services with the San Diego Regional Center thru the B.R.I.D.G.E Project.

Juan Estrada, Molina Healthcare

Molina, Family Health Centers of San Diego, and the MAAC Project are hosting a COVID-19 Vaccination Event. Receive $50 after completed vaccination!Offering dedicated appointments to anyone 12 years of age or older. $50 gift card incentives are provided electronically after the second dose.

We are only offering Pfizer vaccines at this event.Saturday, August 28, 2021 9:00am to 3:00pm1355 Third Ave., Chula Vista CA 91911  
To make an appointment, call (619) 906-5351. Walk-ins welcome!

For more information, visit fhcsd.org/covid-19-vaccines.

Brittney Ochira, National Conflict Resolution Center

NCRC will be hosting an open enrollment Work Readiness Exchange workshop in Arabic on 8/24, 8/25 and 8/26 from 11am- 1pm. Participants will receive a certificate of completion and $100 gift card from NCRC. This is for new arrivals (non-citizens, refugees, asylees, SIVs) and more languages to come! Supported by County HHSA. If you're interested in this or another language, contact Brittney at bochira@ncrconline.com

Melissa Casanova, Family Resource Specialist/Outreach Coordinator for Home Start's home visit program First 5 First Steps

We offer home visits to pregnant women and mothers with children younger than 2 who are receiving CalWORKs. We are always taking referrals to serve the community. If you want to reach out to me via email mcasanova@home-start.org or (619) 402-0278, I can share more information about our program.

**7. Approval of the minutes of the July 20 meeting** Bob Walsh, Secretary

**Adjournment** Ross Fackrell, SDRF Vice Chair, 11:58 a.m.

**Next Meeting**: September 21, 2021

Minutes recorded by Bob Walsh, Secretary