

# Refugee and Immigration Issues Track

IMPACT Conference | March 31 - April 3, 2011 | Stetson University, DeLand, FL

## INTRODUCTION

This track is designed for students, administrators, or partners who have an interest or experience in working with refugee or immigrant groups. Typically, students engage with these populations through their service in schools, refugee/immigrant support agencies, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, or health clinics. Not only does this topic cross over a wide range of social services, but it has reached national news this past year through debates over the DREAM Act and related policy, making refugee and immigrant rights one of the foremost political discussions around contemporary civil rights in the United States. This track will enable participants to share their experiences, discuss the issues, and learn about opportunities for advocacy and social action.

In this track summary, you'll find

- Workshop Guidelines,
- Participant Handouts, and
- A Track Evaluation.

For more information on the track, please contact Kelly Behrend, Program Associate at the Bonner Foundation ([kelly@bonner.org](mailto:kelly@bonner.org)).

## WORKSHOP ABSTRACTS

### 1. Personal Experiences, Public Issues: Refugees, Immigrants, and You

Have you ever wanted to learn more about the refugee and immigrant populations that you live, work and serve with? This session kicks off a specialized track devoted to refugee and immigrant issues! In this session, participants will connect personal experiences in service with relevant public and political issues, learning about some of the major themes that will be addressed in the track. Group discussion will also identify the problems and challenges for the affected populations, the volunteers who serve with them, and the sites and agencies who support them.

### 2. Uncovering [Im]migrant Voices: Exploring the Narratives of the Uprooted

In this workshop, participants will learn about the distinctions of various migrant groups and the structures and institutions that determine their status and rights. Then, participants will have the chance to get creative — analyzing the photography, poetry, and prose of various refugees and immigrants from around the world and creating skits to highlight some of the shared experiences of exile as observed in the artwork. This session is a great way to get to know the dynamics of the refugee and immigrant condition from the [im]migrants themselves.

### 3. "To Legalize or Not to Legalize?": Refugee and Immigrant Political Debates

This workshop will introduce the various political debates within the refugee and immigration issues in our country, tracing their political history, and seeking out the policy options we have today. Track facilitators will be joined by representatives from policy organizations at the federal, statewide, and local level to discuss the policies and the possibilities for refugee and immigrant populations across the country. Join in

on an analysis of policy timelines and discussion around the influences that have shaped the debates over time and the impact it has had on refugees and immigrants.

#### 4. Your Service Toolkit: A Roundtable Discussion on the Essential Skills for Working with Refugees and Immigrants

Like any service sector, there are specific skills that can enhance your impact. This session will cover some of the most prominent skills needed to be an effective service provider for refugees and immigrants. This roundtable discussion will feature tips, tools, and resources on ESL Training, Cross-Cultural Competency, and Providing Access to Social Services. In addition, participants will gain insight on other skills such as psychosocial counseling, working with youth, and reversing stigmas and stereotypes. This is the chance for track participants to come together and share ideas and program models to enhance impact and build capacity.

#### 5. La Plaza Comunitaria: A Model for Empowering Migrant Workers

For many years Stetson has been working with the Pierson community located 11 miles from Stetson's Campus. Pierson is known as "The Fern Capital of the World", where the majority of the population is Mexican-migrant farm workers. Stetson University has partnered with La Plaza Comunitaria, in Pierson, offering different services, including English classes, computer literacy classes, and an after school program for youth in the Pierson community. In this workshop you'll learn about Stetson's partnership with La Plaza Comunitaria and hear from a panel of farm workers who have been exposed to harsh working conditions. They will share their battle for their rights as farm workers.

#### 6. "What Now?" Panel: Making an IMPACT for Refugees and Immigrants

Join the partner organizations of the refugee and immigrant issues track in a final session that covers the career, advocacy, and networking opportunities for making an impact for refugees and immigrants in our country. You'll hear from a diverse panel of professionals who will share how to translate your service experience into a career and the various ways to make a lasting impact.

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## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

A special thank you to the partner organizations who assisted in the development of this track:

- Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service
- La Plaza Comunitaria
- Refugee and Immigration Services of Commonwealth Catholic Charities
- Citizenship Now! CUNY

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

This track was designed, coordinated, and facilitated by:

- Kelly Behrend, Program Associate, Bonner Foundation
- Giuseppe Céspedes, Bonner Leader Program Coordinator, Rutgers University
- Cynthia Douglas, Campaign Coordinator, NJ Learning to End Hunger Program

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