

Diversity

Introduction

During the recent Reality Check Workshops, topical experts and members of the public worked together in small groups to examine a particular topic in-depth. During the two-hour workshops they worked with a trained facilitator to complete the following exercises:

- 1) Review of Ideas. Participants reviewed all of the ideas related to their topic that were collected during the community Idea Gathering Sessions.
- 2) Critical Questions. Participants engaged in a discussion of two Critical Questions, which had been identified by the *Vision for Staten Island* Steering Committee. The facilitator recorded the results of the discussion on flipchart paper, and then helped the group summarize major areas of agreement and disagreement.
- 3) Implementation Recommendations. At the end of the discussion period, each participant wrote down two practical, specific strategies or implementation steps to help Staten Island achieve its vision for their topic.

The results from the Diversity group are provided below. Note that responses have been recorded verbatim, and some errors may remain due to handwriting legibility. Responses are numbered for reference purposes only; this does not indicate any sense of priority.

Critical Question 1:

How do we break down barriers associated with racism, homophobia, and xenophobia and promote integration in our neighborhoods and schools?

1. Key is neighborhood and school. More diversified neighborhoods
2. Teach about each other's culture in schools and churches
3. Communicate that discrimination is unacceptable
4. Education key. Include mental health. Should be more thorough and more well rounded and inclusive
5. Discrimination is learned – okay for people to be different from you. Use media – focus on positives
6. Fear is a basis. Education very early on – home
7. Education through interaction: cross-cultural activities, “domestic exchange program”
8. More cross-cultural activities for youth
9. Very clear public messages that racism not tolerated

Critical Question 1 SUMMARY:

1. Education is key – early childhood to adult professionals
2. Demanding more of political leaders
3. We need to lead the way – SI Vision project is a way
4. Consistent communication in all forms that discrimination not tolerated and positives of differences
5. Accommodate differences in language but move toward proficiency in English

Critical Question 2:

How can we better integrate new immigrants into Staten Island's civic, social, and economic life?

1. Have realtors give out to new homeowners promotional brochures about SI highlights and activities
2. Have programs for basics of American life. Multicultural centers within local SI neighborhoods
3. New immigrant information to be provided by those they trust – “Welcoming New Immigrants Guide”
4. Need to be able to read, write and speak English
5. Encourage festivals
6. Leadership education for identified potential leaders within cultural groups
7. Have lists of hosts/mentors for newly arrived
8. Umbrella organization in specific physical site

Critical Question 2 SUMMARY:

1. Umbrella organization in specific physical site
2. Education/information
3. Easy free access to English literacy for all age groups

Implementation Recommendations:

Consider the draft vision statement, the ideas gathered from the public, and your group's discussion of critical questions. Please recommend two practical, specific strategies or implementation steps that you would recommend to help Staten Island achieve its vision for your topic.

1. Education: The young are key to the long-range positive results we seek in diversity training. Create groups or reasons to have people come together
2. Offer means to get immigrants to come together with new immigrants as well as established people who have been here
3. Easy free access to English literacy for all age groups
4. Funding a space and organization dedicated to fostering the “Vision” of Staten Island that comes from all this – especially educating leadership from diverse groups towards this vision
5. Gather a group of professionals willing to help the immigrants of all countries and (like someone said at the meeting in numbers)
6. Seek the professionals (lawyers, financial counselors, teachers, police officers) to donate their time for this center
7. Develop educational strategy to allow young and old to better understand each other
8. Develop specific plans to provide information to newcomers with information on Staten Island
9. Free easy/available access to English language literacy for adults, children and young adults
10. Establish an umbrella organization to welcome new immigrants
11. Expand free access to English literacy education for all ages
12. Create a multi-cultural indoctrination and information center to ease the transition to Staten Island
13. 60 second PSA's on SI cable put together by Vision Project encouraging SI community to accept and embrace others, have this shown by SI cable – big networks for MTV, SI youth to see
14. SI Brochure

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