

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) Unit**

EASTERN EUROPEAN/ MIDDLE EASTERN SUBCOMMITTEE UNDERSERVED CULTURAL COMMUNITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

January 22, 2020

2pm – 4 pm

Didi Hirsch MHS 1540 E. Colorado St. Glendale Ca. 91205

Present: Sarkis Simonian, Mariam Nahapetyan, Athia Cavrim, Senait Admassu, Norit Admasu, Esiquio Reyes, Seta Haig, Rima Safaryan, Mastaneh Moghadam, Heather Laird, Shakeh Kaftarian, Avo Soltanian

LACDMH staff: Anna Yaralyan, Mirtala Parada Ward and Connie Acosta Castaneda

AGENDA ITEM	COMMENTS/DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS
<b>Introductions</b>	Everyone introduced themselves.
<b>Review &amp; Approval of Meeting Minutes</b>	Minutes were approved by Mastaneh Moghadam and second by Seta Haig.
<b>Cultural Competencies: Engaging the Immigrant and Refugee Communities Presentation – Senait Admassu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Senait Admassu, Athia Cavrim and Norit Admasu gave a presentation titled, “Engaging the Immigrant and Refugee Communities.” Specifically the following information was presented:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the presentation is to network and help Immigrant Refugees.</li> <li>• What are African Communities? African communities were founded by Immigrants. It is an Immigrant driven organization in response to Mental Health issues among African Immigrants in Los Angeles County.</li> <li>• The Refugee immigrants often do not seek help, so organizations must go to where they are.</li> <li>• It's important to ask these questions when working with immigrant refugee families:</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

1. What is the difference between Refugee immigrants experience?

2. How do we serve them?

- This project is funded by MHSA and OAC (Oversight Account and Commissioners), that address the issue of Immigrant Refugee Health Disparities.

❖ **Data:**

- There has been a major increase in the number of Immigrant Refugees since 1970. It arose from 18,000 in 1970 to about 2.1 million and that number keeps increasing.
- We also saw that figure rise to 4.2 million Black Immigrants when people of the African diaspora, including the Caribbean nation, are included in that figure.
- The top countries of origin for African Immigrants are Nigeria which is the most populated, Ethiopia, Egypt and Ghana. These top four countries put together constitute about 41% of the African Immigrant population.
- If one looks at it as a whole with foreigner born Angelinos, they make up about 44% of Los Angeles Counties workforce based on 2016 data.
- Nearly half of the foreign born population and over 2/3 of undocumented population are living below 200% of the Federal poverty level.
- Disparities in the Income between the Populations: Incidence of Poverty
  - All Angelinos: 14%
  - US Born: 7%
  - Foreign Born: 21%

	<p>People with different Immigration statuses have different poverty levels. For example, LPR's (Lawful Permanent Residence) will make more on average than undocumented Angelino's that have similar education levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are three reasons why the System is failing the Immigrants and Refugees: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diversity</li> <li>2. Funding</li> <li>3. Stigma</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Systemic Change needs to take place including these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Work more on collecting data where there is lack of data</li> <li>○ Make relationships with higher ups</li> <li>○ Our voices will make a change</li> <li>○ Round Table discussions; invite Board of Supervisors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Capacity Building Project FY 2018-2019 Updates</b></p>	<p>➤ <b><u>Farsi and Russian Mental Health Theatrical Performance Project</u> – Mastaneh Moghadam updated subcommittee members on this project and reported the following information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We want to create an evening where people feel like they can come and listen to something and hopefully be entertained by doing it.</li> <li>• Theatrical Performances will include open conversation and discussion around mental health topics.</li> <li>• We finished the script, we decided to choose a myth that was pretty popular with the Iranian and Russian cultures, so we went with the Sleeping Beauty myth.</li> <li>• We wrote a script and then modified it to fit each culture and then further modified it when we translated it into each language.</li> <li>• The script has been written and approved by LACDMH.</li> <li>• Translations have been done and sent out to focus groups to review and verify that it is culturally relevant.</li> </ul>

- We started the process of casting. Technically we are a little behind schedule due to the winter holidays. We are going to deliver 6 performances per community, so 12 there will be total of performances between the months of May – July. We should be on track.
- We are having trouble casting Russian speaking people, they need to be fluent in Russian. Please email Mastaneh with any information you may have on where to recruit Russian speaking actors.
- Farsi speaking actors have already been casted.
- Mirtala asked for flyers which promote the time, date, and venues of each Theatrical Performance to be sent to LACDMH prior to each show, in order to promote it on LACDMH Website. Announcements about the time, date and locations of each performance should also be done at SAAC's 2, 4 & 5.
- Mastaneh responded that once locations and times have been determined, flyers will be sent out. This should be done sometime in April.

➤ **Parenting Seminars for the Arabic Community Project – Heather Laird updated subcommittee members on this project and reported the following information:**

- We are done to our last 3 seminars out of 16. We are hoping to have all the seminars done by the end of this month, January 31, however, we are struggling a little with scheduling the last two. We are trying to get into a new venue in Downey which is an all Egyptian organization. We have been having trouble with scheduling.
- We had a seminar this Sunday and we will be having another one this coming Sunday at “Impact the Muslim Public Affairs Council Office.” We have hit our target in terms of population almost every time. Except for last Sunday because of the Holidays.
- Overall our experiences on conducting the seminars been positive. People have asked for more Lectures and Parenting Seminars.
- Our barriers come in terms of Capacity, having enough people to give the presentation to. Also, the community is struggling with seeing the importance of funding these projects within the community.

➤ **Parenting Seminars for the Armenian Community Project – Avo Soltanian:**

- There has not been any Seminars conducted as of yet.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first Seminar secured at the following location, Baghdasarian-Shahinian Hall, on 3347 N. San Fernando Rd., LA, CA, 90065, on February 29, 2020, 1:00pm – 4:30pm.</li> <li>• Avo reached out to several Arminian Private Schools by email or by phone calls. They are not open for someone to come and talk about Parenting, especially from someone they do not know. So that is a big challenge.</li> <li>• Some ideas were shared with Avo on how to reach out to the community; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to events to get to know people that can help; socialize over coffee or tea</li> <li>2. Build relationships and trust</li> <li>3. Non-stigmatizing approach</li> <li>4. Do not use the words Mental Health, terminology is very important</li> <li>5. Offer to pay for space or venue, have food and refreshments</li> <li>6. Some places to look into; Sports events, Recreational Programs, After School Programs, Libraries, Armenian Non-Profit Organizations, and coffee shops.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>New Capacity Building Project FY 2019 – 2020 - Updates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The SOWs for these four Capacity Building Projects have all been completed and turned in and waiting for approval. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expansion of Russian PSA's to Ethnic TV and Radio Stations</li> <li>2. Poetry Night Groups for Farsi Speaking Older Adults</li> <li>3. Focus Groups to Increase Capacity in Mental Health Services in the Arabic Speaking Community</li> <li>4. Armenian Wellness Festival</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Brainstorming of Capacity Building Projects FY 2020 - 2021</b></p>	<p><u>Mirtala Parada Ward:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department wants to make sure that we stay on task with the Capacity Building Projects; we need to align our projects with our funding.</li> <li>• This subcommittee will get its funding again on July 1, 2020.</li> <li>• The subcommittee needs to talk about new Capacity Building Project ideas next meeting so that we are done with the brainstorming by April to give the staff enough time to write the SOW (Statements of Work).</li> <li>• Once a Capacity Project Proposal is submitted to LACDMH, it becomes the property of DMH. The solicitation process must be protected and internally we have the right to make modifications to that proposal to meet the needs of the department.</li> <li>• SAAC's should also have an opportunity to provide their mental health project ideas because they have some expertise in terms to geography.</li> </ul>

**Future Meeting Times  
& Dates**

- **2/26/2020**
- **3/25/2020**
- **4/29/2020**

Location of the Meetings:

Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services – 1540 Colorado St. Glendale, CA 91205