

One Nation: An Insight Into Islam and Its Various Cultures

Organization: Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

Project duration: Nine months

Summary of skills used: Collaboration, multimedia content production, project management, relationship building, research

Project background: Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County is the only agency in the South Bay that has spent over 30 years resettling refugees from all around the world. Their Refugee Resettlement Department received a One Nation grant for \$5,000 for the purpose of using it to improve Muslim relations within Santa Clara County.

Challenges:

- The Refugee Resettlement Department was getting an increase in refugees from many Muslim countries, each with their own customs and cultural traditions.
- Many of the case managers and new employees lacked knowledge of Islam and the cultures of the new refugees they were trying to help. Because of this, case managers were having trouble helping their clients assimilate successfully and secure employment.
- The incoming and current refugees spanned all age groups, life stages and education levels.

Approach:

Assess the Situation

Before being able to improve Muslim relations within Santa Clara County, we first needed to figure out what needed to improve. A council comprised of leaders from within Santa Clara's diverse cultural communities and case managers met to assess the situation and discuss possible solutions.

Research Resources

Cultural, religious and community research was done via community surveys from active members in the local Muslim community, former refugees, new refugees, non-Muslim community members, students and case managers. The sample size included people of all age groups, life stages and different education levels.

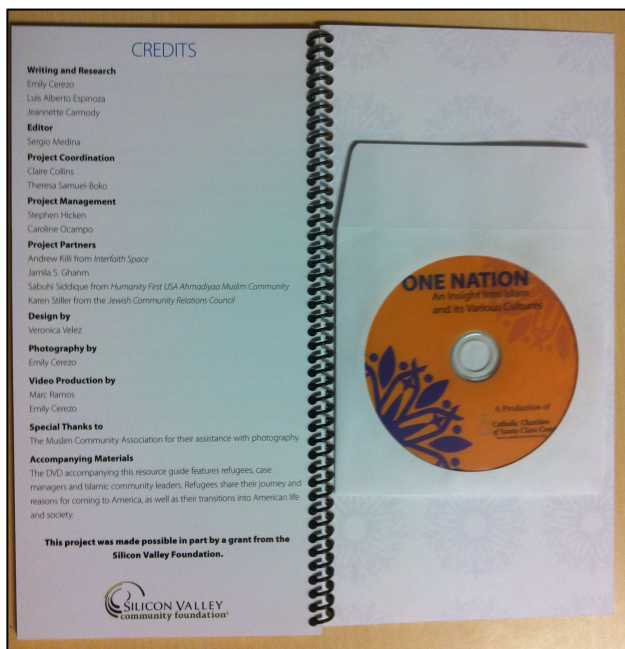
Traditional methods of research were also used in addition to site visits of places that were meaningful to the local Muslim community.

Results:

A cultural resource guide was developed, complete with local resources and accompanying DVD. It has been distributed to over 60 private and public agencies in addition to private individuals.

The Printed Guide

The cultural guide was designed to be comfortable enough to carry and fit easily in a purse or bag. The thick cardstock was chosen for durability. The matte finish makes the pages easy to edit as the user can easily add more resources or notes to it. The inside pocket contains a convenient pouch to hold the accompanying DVD.



The DVD

The One Nation guide DVD contains interviews with current refugees, refugees who have successfully assimilated into their new communities, community leaders and case managers.

The purpose of the additional element was to let the people featured in the DVD share their own experiences (based on their current stage and role in the process) in their own words.