



Vision 2025

Summit of International Groups

Contributing to Our Community – Coordinating Our Future

Summit Report

March 4, 2008

Executive Summary

A committee of Vision 2025 organized the Summit of International Groups meeting to begin involving members of the international groups in the planning process. Attendance at the Summit, held at the Innovate Building in Greenville, was impacted by the weather, but 38 people representing more than 20 groups attended. Through an interview and discussion process, participants identified areas of common interest, issues and dreams. Interests were strongly expressed in the areas of "Learning about Each Other," "Share Our Culture With Each Other," "Space and/or Place," "Education" and "School." Each of these areas were discussed and highlighted during the Summit. Follow-on Options include: sending this report to all participants and invitees; combining some of the theme areas into a second workshop to work out specific actions that could be taken; organizing a workshop on "program planning" for the international community groups.

Background

The Committee

The members of the Summit planning committee were: Patricia Ravenhorst, Veena Khandke, Patricia Harrison, and Chirinjev Peterson. This committee operates under the umbrella of Greenville Forward and Vision 2025 International Task Force.

The Plan

"Greenville Forward's mission is to enhance the quality of life for greater Greenville by engaging citizens in continually updating, promoting, and facilitating a community vision for 2025 and beyond." The International Task Force is one of 17 task groups of Greenville Forward meeting regularly to promote and involve groups and organization representing over 70 counties, as well as regional and ethnic groups from six continents. The Summit of International Groups was one of the International Task Forces ways of involving the larger community.

The Facilitator

A new resident to Greenville, SC, David Esch, was qualified and volunteered to work with the Committee to facilitate the Summit. David had lived in Ghana, Guyana, Pakistan and Russia, as well as having worked in over 30 countries during the past 25 years where he gained experience working with local government, civil society groups and holds a Masters Degree in Management.

Summit

The committee gathered names and contact information for over 50 individuals, all of whom were invited to the workshop. Pre-Summit registration grew to 55 participants from 24 separate groups, of whom 38 people representing 20 groups showed up on March 4 on a stormy, windy, rainy evening at 5:30 pm for snacks and drinks. The Summit began at 6:00 pm and ended at 8:00 pm.

Major Highlights

- Patricia Ravenhorst opened the Summit with a few remarks about Vision 2025 and the desire to involve organizations and groups representing the international community.
- Patricia introduced Mayor Knox White; the Mayor highlighted the long history of the international community in the development of the Upstate and encouraged Summit participants to continue this legacy with renewed interest and involvement in the future. The Mayor cited international investment and the international community as one of the most crucial factors in the development of the Upstate in the last two decades.
- Patricia Harrison welcomed participants and introduced the facilitator, C. David Esch.
- Participants were divided into pairs, where they interviewed each other in three areas:
 - Tell me about a time when you were most proud of the organization you represent at this workshop. What made this moment possible? What was your role in the activity or event?
 - Tell me about something your organization does well. What are the strongest skills, knowledge and experiences within your organization?
 - Tell me about one dream you have for our (or your) community that would involve your organization and others?
- Participants were then divided into six groups of four to six people, where they introduced each other and discussed common themes, issues and dreams. After about 30 minutes each group made a summary report and presented ideas, issues and dreams on "Post It" notes.
- The evening closed with the Committee talking about possible next steps and participants introducing themselves.
- This report was written by the facilitator.

Group Notes

Notes from the six groups are presented below; similar ideas have been grouped. Each statement was expressed on a "post it" note from one of the groups.

- **Learning about Each Other –**
 - ***Dream:***
 - For all international groups to learn about each other and be comfortable together.
 - Open up the world to the children of Greenville.
 - Need a way to educate the majority of the Greenville community on what we want.
 - Smaller, more intimate events that allow people to get to know one another on a deeper level.
 - ***Issue:***
 - How to educate local residents on the benefits of having immigrants/an international presence in Greenville; local residents don't always, or rarely, seem interested in getting involved on a personal level (beyond attending festivals, sampling the cuisine, etc.) – need to generate an interest in outreach. Panel for asking questions and interacting.
- **Share Our Culture With Each Other –**
 - We want to celebrate important days in different cultures.
 - We have a shared history and experiences – especially with mixed cultures.
 - Encourage and help international residents to engage and interact with Greenville community.
 - Lead individual Greenvillians to feel a personal connection to the international community.
 - Have an international cultural day.

- Want to keep original culture, but also be part of America.
- Fit into a community, but keep our identity.
- Develop larger celebrations of cultural holidays and festivals.

Space/Place –

- We want to have a place to meet, share our culture, have classes and festivals to display information.
- A space to facilitate interaction – a mini UN.
- Some businesses are interested in leasing space to reach international clientele and present international image; an international business center.
- A building to be an international center for groups to have offices, meetings, etc.
- A space for individual communities and groups to hold meetings.
- A place for the Turkish Community to get together.

• **School –**

- International School.
- International School for children.
 - This topic received more discussion from participants than the two pieces of paper. At times it was linked to the next topic, but it was a separate interest area most of the time.

• **Education –**

- Education. Language. Languages for children, multi-levels.
- Teaching children the culture and language.
- Orientation for newcomers to the Greenville area – history, getting around, cultural nuances of Greenville and the South, packages with important local information (ICU website already has some of this information).
- ICU website has links to contact info for people from various countries/regions – what about local “mentors” for newcomers?
- Get students involved (Furman, high schoolers, etc.).
- Furman and the Converse schools are great resources.
- Students who are international, professors, etc.
- No channel right now for international people to share ideas – need to collaborate with people who can put them into writing in English, they have lots to share.

- Fair for fund raising.
- A city of side walks and bike paths.
- Really want an international section in the Greenville News. Profile international residents in the area, showcase events and festivals, create awareness in the surrounding community. We think we can come up with plenty of interest/people willing to contribute and write articles just in this room.
- Want an “international” tab on Greenvilleonline.com – info, statistics, Greenville business personalities, traditions, upcoming events, etc.
- My dream – have a travel program for adults (may be sponsored by the ICU, future Greenville International Center, etc.) where Greenville residents (both native and international) can travel to the homelands of other group members. A yearly trip could be organized to the hometown of an international resident (or one of Greenville’s Sister Cities) in order to experience firsthand the culture, customs, traditions and lifestyle of that city and regions. Participants in the trip could return to Greenville and share their experiences with the local community through articles, photos, etc. A hands-on way to expand our cultural horizons.

Next Steps – Options

The following are some options as identified by the facilitator; these are not “official” next steps for Vision 2025, but options for the Committee’s consideration.

1. Send out this report and a thank you note from the Committee to all participants of the workshop. A second mailing could be done to the entire original list of invitees where the committee thanks them for considering the opportunity, regrets that they were unable to attend, but hopes they will be able to participate in future activities and give them a copy of the report.
2. Organize a 4 hour workshop on three areas– **A.** Combine three topics into one: learning about each other, share our culture with each other, and education; **B.** A place to meet. I recommend the grouping the grouping of the three areas in item A, as many of the areas of possible activities cross over the three themes. **C.** Education – An international school; several people showed a lot of interest in this area during the discussion.

While “schools” were discussed more in the group report-outs, it was noted only by a couple of groups on the “post it” notes. The Committee may want to add schools as a third topic as there appeared to be considerable interest.

Each workshop would be for the purpose of beginning the process of defining the areas to be discussed, identifying possible areas for actions and who/which organizations should be involved to move things to specifics. This workshop would then be followed by several “task groups” taking up the work to come up with specific actions that could be undertaken to bring about solutions and resolutions to some of the concerns and issues identified during the Summit.

3. Several groups noted during the Summit that they undertake an annual cultural event and are struggling with how to make money to fund their activities and how to get people involved with their group or culture beyond the annual event. A full day workshop could be organized on “innovative program planning” for associations and non-profits which would involve four members from each group. The focus would be on the international groups providing them with information on options for programs for half of the program and then spend two or three hours having each group of participants plan events for the next year.
4. Summit participants should be encouraged to become active in Vision 2025 International Task Force. The committee and meetings are open to new members/participants. The International Task Force is one of Greenville Forward groups working on Vision 2025; additional information is available at <http://www.greenvilleforward.com>

Appendix – List of Registered Participants and Attendees

Please note this list includes those who were pre-registered as well as those who attended.

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Alka	Bhavsar	Progressive Indian Women's Club
Rosemary	Bomar	Greenville Faith Communities United/Vision 2025
Guest of	Bomar	Greenville Faith Communities United
Pankaj	Dave	India Association of Greater Greenville
Eric	Dumait	École Française Bilingue
Cecilia	Elguera	Peruvian Association
Guest of	Elguera	Peruvian Association
David	Esch	Vision 2025
Lillian	Garcia	AHAM (Hispanic American Women's Association)
Jerry	Gibbins	International Center of the Upstate
Monique	Glass	Alliance Francaise
Bill	Glass	Alliance Francaise
Myles	Golden	Rotary International/Vision 2025
Patricia	Harrison	International Center of the Upstate
Veena	Khandke	Progressive Indian Women's Club/Vision 2025
Brock	Koonce	Greenville Forward
Luz	Lopez	Latin Cultural Exchange
Guest of	Lopez	Latin Cultural Exchange
Guest of	Lopez	Latin Cultural Exchange
Guest of	Lopez	Latin Cultural Exchange
Craig	Lundgren	Japan America Association of SC
Marissa	Marquez	Phillipine American Association
Dorota	Matys	Polish Association
Adela	Mendoza	ACCH (Asociación para la colaboración en la comunidad hispano)
Pascal	Natiez	École Française Bilingue
Vanessa	Ollar	Families with Children From China
Anna	Ottosen	
Corey	Ottosen	
Betty Elrod	Owens	African Heritage Association/Vision 2025
Tolga	Ozarslan	Turkish Community
Chirinjev	Peterson	Greenville Tech International Education
Han	Pham	Vietnamese American Veterans Association
Guest of	Pham	Vietnamese American Association
Guest of	Pham	Vietnamese American Association
Nadia	Price	Upstate International Business Network
Patricia	Ravenhorst	Greenville Sister Cities International/Vision 2025
Steve	Schultz	
Russell	Stall	Greenville Forward
Gunnel	Strom	Swedish Club
Hans	Strom	Swedish Club
Wanda	Tao	Greenville Chinese Cultural Association
Riva	Taylor	Greenville Tech International Education
Phuong	Vo	Vietnamese American Association
Klaus	Westerwelle	Vision 2025
Flavia	Westerwelle	Vision 2025
Inho	Yoon	Korean Association
Samuel	Linder	Swiss American Society
Dick	O'Brien	Ancient Order of the Hibernians (Irish)
Zhigang	Tian	Greenville Sister Cities International