

Returnee Initiative Activity Report – Fall 2010

As we officially conclude 2010 Returnee Initiative activities, we would like to present a short brief of our accomplishments, challenges, and progress.

Brief History:

AFS-USA Returnee Initiative started in October 2009, with the establishment of the Returnee Initiative Task Force (RITF), under the National Council. The task force was charged with the goal of creating a vibrant returnee network which provided meaningful development opportunities to our returnees while creating supporting and rejuvenating volunteer resources to the area teams. Quickly RITF reached out to the first group of returnees, made up of 15 Returnee Initiative Leaders (RI-Leaders) today, who helped strategize the returnee movement, in three key areas:

- Returnee Network Development Focus Group
- Returnee Volunteer Structure Focus Group
- Returnee Communications Focus Group

2010 was the year of establishing returnee integration needs and awareness

The top and most important task of RITF was to establish the returnee integration needs and means in our existing national volunteer structure. To accomplish those RITF implemented various tasks:

- RITF created the Returnee Initiative Plan and Mission Statement to support AFS-USA Business Plan
- Built the Returnee Initiative Leadership group (15 returnees)
- Created and established the Returnee Life Cycle
- Presented the intergenerational Returnee and Returnee Life Cycle concepts at the NVA, Sending/Volunteer Development Conference, and Hosting Conference
- Created a needs assessment survey for the NVA Delegates to understand their returnee utilization practices and needs
- Brought together a group of returnees and organizational leaders during our Inaugural Returnee Summit in June 2010
- Presented two workshops in Sending/Volunteer Coordinator and Hosting Conferences on “How to Utilize Returnees in Supporting Roles for the area team and chapter activities”
- Published directions for ‘how to find your Returnees’ on the wiki
- Revised and revitalized the Returnee Coordinator job description with a group of younger returnees, to make it more appealing today’s returnees
- Developed RI Leader job description and application process, and generated interest in the role (about 15-20 people)
- Drafted the returnee support of the Youth Service Day 2011
- Created two new affiliations in Global Link for RI Leaders and Returnee Mentors

RITF and RI Leaders are currently working on the 2011 Expansion Plan

After our efforts to establish the leadership and communication structures to the returnee movement in 2010, 2011 is foreseen to be the year for growth by integrating returnee coordinators, returnees, and RI Leaders in our area teams and chapters with meaningful and impactful roles.

- RI expansion plan aims to identify and recruit 30-50 Returnee Coordinators to integrate returnees to their respective AT/Chapter areas and to the national RI activities
- Returnee Coordinators will work collaboratively with all of AT leaders, Volunteer Coordinators, Community Developers, and the RI Leaders
- RITF will ensure the integrated returnees are oriented and educated
- RITF will oversee a group of three interns who will manage the activities, communication, integration, and development of the Returnee Initiative
- RITF will prioritize Sending Roles to be supported by returnees in stages 4-7 from the Returnee Life Cycle
- Planning and discussions are continued around a “functional” Returnee Database and a Returnee Resource Center
- RITF will support the recruitment of 30+ returnees to Sponsored Programs orientations in 2011 and provide an in-person training for the returnee roles

RI interns starting in January 2011 will oversee the expansion plan. General responsibilities:

- Expansion Plan implementation: Expand the # of active Returnees who are engaged with AFS as volunteers
- Task Force Members: Act as leaders and developers of the Returnee Initiative; help to drive, motivate and conduct outreach for volunteer Returnee Initiative Leaders
- Spokespersons for RI as members of the RITF: Conduct outreach to staff and volunteers and promote initiatives
- Mini-team member: Work together as a 3 intern team to accomplish goals
- New RI Leader approval: Review and approve the new RI members and update Returnee affiliations in the Global Link data base

RITF's main challenge is the leadership team's other roles within the organization

Therefore, the 2011 Expansion Plan is foreseen to be strategically very important in order to expand this returnee driven movement.

We hope to have your support in doing so. Please recommend your nominees of returnees who would be interested in joining this movement by writing to us at:

returneeinitiative@afsusa.org