Refugee Resettlement and the Local/Global Politics of Culture, Community, Inclusion, and Leadership

Pre-conference Workshop
Wednesday 2 November 2016
9:00 – 16:00 | Clarkson Community Center; Emory University
Register for this pre-conference workshop at http://www.ila-net.org/conferences/register
Candler School of Theology students, faculty, staff and community partners should register at http://tinyurl.com/ILRRWorkshop

Short Description: This workshop will assemble local community leaders, leadership development practitioners, international scholars, and students to explore what leadership looks like on the front lines of the global refugee crisis. We will meet with elected officials and community leaders from Clarkston, Georgia, a local community in the Atlanta metro area that is helping displaced persons and families to establish new homes and lives in the face of cultural, political, and economic barriers of exclusion. Our goal is to uncover new insights that we can incorporate into research, teaching, and development practice as we address one of the most complex challenges facing the world today.

The morning will consist of a tour of Clarkston, Georgia, and a dialogue with community leaders, including Clarkston Mayor Edward “Ted” Terry. The afternoon will consist of a lunch and workshop hosted at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. During the workshop case-driven, small group discussions and a plenary panel will explore the opportunities and challenges for inclusive leadership in and around Clarkston, and in relation to refugee issues more generally. Small groups will be facilitated jointly by community leaders from Clarkston, Candler students, and international members of the ILA to highlight intersections between the local and global dynamics of the refugee crisis.

Timetable:
• 8:30 am For ILA registrants, bus leaves Hyatt for Clarkston, Georgia (25 minute drive)
• 9:00-9:30 Arrive in Clarkston, driving tour of the town facilitated by local leaders
• 9:30-11:30 Meet with community leaders at Clarkston Community Center
• 11:30-12:00 Travel to Candler/Emory
• 12:00-1:00 Lunch & Introduction to afternoon workshop
• 1:00-2:15 Small group case discussions with Clarkston community leaders, ILA members and Candler School of Theology students working in the refugee community
• 2:15-2:30 Coffee break
• 2:30-3:30   Panel discussion with contributions from small groups
• 3:30-4:00   Closing address and looking forward
• 4:00-      Transportation back to Hyatt

Note: Individuals who register through Candler School of Theology will be responsible for transportation to the Clarkston Community Center, and to the Candler School of Theology for the afternoon session. Registration is available to Candler students, faculty and community partners here: http://tinyurl.com/ILRRWorkshop.

Detailed Description:

On the November 16, 2015, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal issued an executive order halting any state involvement in the resettlement of Syrian refugees, and directing the Georgia Emergency Management Agency to confirm that any Syrian refugees already residing in the state did not pose a security risk. The governor’s order put him in league with the many other political leaders and U.S. presidential candidates tripping over each other to appear tough on terrorism and immigration. The day after Governor Deal’s announcement, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie argued that any such ban should extend even to Syrian orphans under the age of five. And within a few weeks, presidential candidate Donald Trump would call for a ban on all Muslims entering the United States, a sentiment echoed by 66% of the roughly 270,000 Republicans who voted in the New Hampshire primaries in early February.

Governor Deal rescinded his order only after the State Attorney General determined that he had no legal right to issue it. It is easy to conclude from these events that xenophobia, fear mongering, and exclusion are increasingly popular sentiments, and that public officials are leading and governing accordingly. Fortunately, there is more to the story. On the same day that Governor Deal issued his order, Mayor Ted Terry of Atlanta suburb of Clarkston spoke out on the side of compassion, reason, inclusion, and an altogether different type of leadership. “The reality is that extending a welcoming hand and relief for people who, through no fault of their own are caught up in this civil war, is an incredibly smart and powerful way to engender confidence and friendship across the Middle East and across the entire world,” said Terry. As he pointed out, Clarkston had already opened its doors to 125 Syrian refugees, and fully intended to do more.

By January of this year, the town had made good on Mayor Terry’s promise, welcoming 50 more Syrian refugees and further cementing the town’s reputation as the “Ellis Island of the South” and one of the most successful refugee resettlement hubs in the country. A PBS documentary on the changing demographics of American communities has highlighted Clarkston as a community that has shifted from 90% white to less than 14% white over the last few decades, largely as a result of welcoming nearly 60,000 refugees during that period. As the Christian Science Monitor has pointed out, four out of five refugee families become economically self-sufficient within six months of arriving in Clarkston. In a series of articles in the New York Times (and later a bestselling book Outcasts United), Warren St. John told the inspiring story of the Fugees, a soccer team that has united and nurtured refugee children from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Burundi, Congo, Gambia, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia, Somalia and Sudan.
Clarkston is a place where the global meets the local, and where informal, community, and grass-roots leadership is at least as important as formal and political leadership. Many resettled refugees play important leadership roles in Clarkston, working alongside social entrepreneurs and service organizations to empower other members of the community. For these many reasons, ILA members stand to learn an immense amount from Clarkston about the dynamics — and challenges — of inclusive leadership at the intersection of the local and the global. We will therefore assemble local community leaders, leadership development practitioners, international scholars, and students to explore what inclusive leadership looks like on the front lines of the global refugee crisis, in a local community where displaced persons and families are establishing new homes and new lives, and making their own contributions, in the face of cultural, political, and economic barriers of exclusion. Our goal is to uncover new insights and perspectives that we can incorporate into our research, teaching, and development practice in order to cultivate the kinds of leadership that can address one of the most complex challenges facing the world today.

The morning will consist of a tour of Clarkston and a dialogue with community leaders at the Clarkston Community Center. The group will reconvene at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, which hosts the James T. and Berta R. Laney Legacy in Moral Leadership and a practicum program through which a large number of students work with refugee serving organizations each year. After lunch, we will conduct case-driven, small group discussions followed by a plenary panel session to explore various perspectives on inclusive leadership in and around Clarkston and the refugee issue more generally. Our small group discussions will be facilitated jointly by community members and local leaders from Clarkston together with Candler students and international members of the ILA in order to foster dialogue about the intersections between the local and the global dynamics of the refugee crisis.

Several of the participants in this workshop have organized a more academically-themed pre-conference workshop for the Academy of Management conference in August that focuses on the implications of the global refugee and migration crisis for leadership theory and research. This proposal for the ILA conference complements and extends that effort by highlighting the importance of local, community leadership and grass-roots contributions to inclusive leadership. Both of these workshop proposals have been organized by an international coalition of representatives from the Leadership Collaboratory at the Copenhagen Business School, the Kravis Leadership Institute at Claremont McKenna College, The GCSP-CCL Alliance for Advancing Leadership in Peace and Security (an initiative of the Geneva Center for Security Policy and the Center for Creative Leadership), the Albert Luthuli Center for Responsible Leadership at the University of Pretoria, and the Leadership Centre at the Lancaster University School of Management, along with several others. We hail from the US, the UK, continental Europe, the Pacific Rim, and South Africa. This diverse group shares a concern for asking the question “leadership for what?” and for exploring how leadership research, theory, development, and practice can emphasize issues of higher purpose and social engagement over conventional leadership research on personal and organizational influence and effectiveness.