

Addendum C: Service Programs

In comparison to Roundtables, Service Programs would be less collaborative and focus on using attendees' specific skills sets to help with a short-term project. We suggest that a wiki-style website, similar to that for Roundtable Discussions, be created wherein community organizations can post service opportunities up to one or two months before GA to ensure that projects are timely and relevant to the current needs of our organizations. We propose that this structure be adopted so that organizations are allowed to identify and determine for themselves how short-term volunteers can best be utilized. On the wiki-site, we would post information on the background of our organizations, an overview of the project, what skills would be needed, how many people were needed and for how long, and additional concerns about accessibility (including checkpoints, terrain problems that would restrict participation for those with mobility issues, etc.). This will also give local organizations that already have an established relationship in the community an opportunity to lend their expertise and experience, which will be critical to the success of any service project. Projects that were posted well ahead of time would also invite further collaboration (e.g., several CDBs have discussed expanding their community gardens. They could use the expertise of attendees familiar with rainwater management to help plan their project before GA and then have attendees help dig the garden during GA).

As a more specific example, No More Deaths, an allied organization that provides humanitarian aid to migrants in the Sonoran Desert, does not allow volunteers to serve for less than two weeks at camp because orientation and logistics are a continual drain on infrastructure. Therefore, many attendees would not be able to provide this specific service. However, No More Deaths has a continual need for volunteers to help with strengthening and streamlining their infrastructure. Although they cannot anticipate now what their service project needs will be next year, recent projects could have benefited from short-term volunteers as long as they had the appropriate skill sets. For example, the volunteer donation system was recently transferred into an online format for merging with a general mailing list database. To automate this transfer, several macros needed to be written by volunteers who were only somewhat familiar with this. If a computer programmer were available, this would have taken much less time. Therefore, the time spent by volunteers to orient the programmer would have been recouped by the time saved by having a programmer. For this organization, this would have been a worthwhile investment.

Most importantly, we request that service programs and opportunities hosted at PCC also be offered at *decentralized* locations based on community needs and interests. We are concerned that service projects held at PCC will be neither relevant nor practical for our communities. For example, we have heard of several references to setting up health clinics, voter registration and/or citizenship fairs at PCC. We recognize that the UUA is accountable to delegates and attendees to provide an accessible General Assembly, but we must also hold ourselves accountable to and provide accessible services for the Arizona community. There is an inherently troubling dynamic to ask undocumented and otherwise disenfranchised communities to bear the risk and burden associated with travel to a centralized location when those of us who have the privilege of documentation and are physically able to do so could, with comparative ease, travel to satellite locations in the barrios. If CDBs feel that health clinics would be valuable for their specific barrios, they could request these clinics on the wiki site and identify a location that would be accessible to people in their barrios. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that the primary purpose of a community health fair is to get people without access to medical services into an ongoing relationship with a medical provider and the people most likely to attend such an event will be more likely to have conditions that require follow up care. There are concerns about how relationships will be established with medical providers from outside Arizona, how follow up care would be managed for those who require it, in addition to the reality that many undocumented people will not travel to PCC due to concerns previously cited. It will be critical to partner with the local medical community already providing services that can coordinate follow up care for those in the community who need it.