



DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

REPORT 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY – THE ORIGINS OF A MOVEMENT

Once more Dialogue on Diversity concludes a year's cycle of programs for its many faceted corps of interested women and men dedicated to making the diversity of our society an engine of innovation and enrichment of personal social and economic life, and not a matrix of contention and strife. The Dialogue is a not-for-profit corporation, organized under the laws of the District of Columbia in November 1991 and enjoying tax exempt status as an organization dedicated to educational purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

It took form initially in the period of ferment, reaching its apogee in the early 1990s, that broadly affected the social structures in the first and second worlds; women in western Europe and North America reached out to the women of eastern Europe, only then emerging from the disintegration of the empire behind the iron curtain. A party of Latino women, drawn from around the country and organized by M^a. Cristina Caballero, traveled to cities of Russia and its "near abroad", in turn sponsoring exchange visits with women of the emerging economic society and the inchoate political cultures of the former Soviet states. It was not a long step from these interactions with enterprising women counterparts from a distant and in many ways alien culture to the beginnings of a continuing interface among the varied cultural and ethnic communities more broadly. The name Dialogue on Diversity thus crystallized the intentions of these founding women in 1990. Dialogue on Diversity is a membership organization, whose benefits are offered to a broad circle of associates and friends. The demographics of the organization continue to reflect the founding inspiration of Diversity. We find it gratifying that without any semblance of quotas, our audiences and our rosters of speakers continue to bring together the diverse cultural strains of American society.

THE PROGRAM CYCLE

In Dialogue on Diversity's programming, the yearly cycle of colloquia and conferences for 2010, again targeted to Latino women, touched on several themes of key importance to the women of our many-cultured society. These are the impacts of public policies on health, on the fortunes of migrants in our midst, on our security from the effects of poverty; but also the range of strategies for our fashioning a serviceable economic viability in an often harsh business and labor-market environment.

➤ **DATA PRIVACY — COLLOQUIUM, JANUARY 27, 2010, MOTT HOUSE, CAPITOL HILL**

Each year the Dialogue's opening event is the colloquium in late January on information technology and the state of privacy for the variety of individuals in our communities – the young and vulnerable, often tempted by social networking offshoots, the consumers who puzzle over the faceless designers of internet content who know more about us than we ourselves, the citizen apprehensive of an inquisitive and technologically armed state. National experts on the gamut of privacy issues speak to our elite audience of several score professionals and entrepreneurs.

➤ **PUBLIC POLICY FORUM ON MARCH 5, 2010, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

Dialogue on Diversity's full-scale public policy conference is held each March at a Capitol Hill or other central Washington site. Academic experts, legislators and public sector administrators, think-tank scholars, and others discuss our health care and entitlements and public finance problems,

immigration policy, education practice as the builder of a sound human capital resource for an advanced society. The 2010 Forum coincided with Women's History Month and was presented in collaboration with the American Islamic Congress, with resulting refinement of outlook in viewing the status of women around the globe, reviewing especially the vexed questions of women's struggle for a place in the sun in the Middle East, Latin America, and elsewhere in the world. Among speakers were Ms. Harriet Fulbright, head of the J. William and Harriet Fulbright Center, Zainab al-Suwaij, Executive Director of the American Islamic Congress, Giselle Lundy-Ponce of the American Federation of Teachers, an authority on early childhood education, Dr. Heidi Hartmann, President of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, Dr. Gabriela Lemus of the Department of Labor, and Irma Harahush of the Census Bureau, with which Dialogue on Diversity partnered in encouraging participation in the 2010 count.

➤ **HEALTH CARE SYMPOSIUM, MAY 12, 2010, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS**

The recently enacted health care legislation was a central topic. Satisfaction with the legislative achievement was tempered by reflections on the arduous and unpredictable process of designing regulations to implement the vast reach of the statute. A knowledgeable audience of well over 100 listened intently to the views of Eleanor Holmes Norton, Randi Weingarten, Raymond Joseph and Congresswoman Donna M. Christensen for a Caribbean perspective on the question, Tevi Troy, former second in command at the Department of Health and Human Services, and several among the smart, seldom seen Congressional staff who had been at the center of action as provisions were hammered out to the satisfaction of a contentious legislative membership. Again in 2010 the Dialogue, in partnership with the America Kidney Fund, provided for all interested persons – among them several dozen elderly persons attending through the services of Washington's Vida Senior Center – free medical testing for hypertension, diabetes, kidney function, and other health-threatening conditions.

➤ **ENTREPRENEURSHIP/IT CONFERENCE, JULY 14, 2010, CAPITOL VISITORS CENTER**

Detailed how-to treatment of a train of key business tasks for the small entrepreneur delighted an overflow audience at the Visitors Center on Capitol Hill at this annual mid-summer conference. Application procedures for the highly valued "8(a)" status were explained, the techniques for seeking SBA loans were laid out, as were the present, often stringent qualifications affecting bank lending. SBA and private experts on Microfinance detailed the opportunities within reach of many beginning small and "micro" entrepreneurs. Speakers offered a run-down on prospective legislation focusing on small business recovery issues, together with the soon to be released rules on women-owned business preferences. Ana Harvey, SBA's Assistant Secretary for Women's Business Ownership, and Alejandra Castillo, Deputy National Director of the Minority Business Development agency in the Department of Commerce, highlighted the day's agenda. A major theme of the 2010 Conference was the pervasive collection of personal and business information through the rapidly advancing capabilities of the internet and other instruments of information technology, and the strategies by which personal privacy and a desired degree of business confidentiality may be protected in this environment, both by one's own action and through governmental and other legal regulation. The program, finally, included awards to three outstanding young women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial mentors – one, Cristina Mossi, a brilliant businesswoman, the designer of computer systems, while another, Evelyn Brooks, a native of Peru, is a much admired jewelry designer, and Charlie Partridge, a PEPCO Holdings supplier diversity executive who is also the genial coach and mentor to a stable of promising entrepreneurial thoroughbreds.

... AND FARTHER AFIELD

The Dialogue's entrepreneurship programs have extended their reach to Puerto Rico and its women entrepreneurs, an active, productive, and numerous band of workers in the economic arena. The year 2009 included a conference on small business topics at the Universidad del Este at Carolina (San Juan) Puerto Rico, while in March, 2010, the related South Florida branch of the university system presented a similar conference at its handsome new Fort Lauderdale site. The conference, paired with a striking art exhibition featuring work of women artists from all parts of Latin America now working in the Gold Coast. Dialogue on Diversity collaborated in both these conferences, which are to be repeated in contemporary versions for 2011 and subsequent years.

➤ **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COLLOQUIUM, OCTOBER 20, 2010, LA RAZA HEADQUARTERS**

The painful but pressing concerns over incidents of domestic violence, those affecting mainstream, Latino, Mid-East, and other cultures alike, and which are at last being brought into sharp focus at the highest level of the national Administration, were the topic for a roster of expert speakers before a notably knowledgeable audience at the elegant La Raza offices on Sixteenth Street in Washington. Raul Yzaguirre, the new U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic and the long-time President of La Raza, offered introductory remarks, while Lynn Rosenthal of the White House, where she directs the Violence Against Women initiatives, reporting directly to the Vice President, detailed the growing awareness of the DV scourge and brought a powerful case for throwing all available resources into the effort. Among other speakers in a distinguished lineup, Sabrina Balgamwalla, a young attorney with the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center, related the specifics of domestic violence in the myriad variants she daily encounters in a diverse clientele, but closed with a profound and powerful analysis: assessing the place of deep-seated cultural habitudes in the face of an external moral standard as one faces the practicalities of abusive conduct in all their ugly variety. The D.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence, joined by a coalition of service organizations serving the predominantly Latino community, and other organizations actively collaborated in the program.

➤ **HOLIDAY FAIR AND CHILDREN'S GIFT COLLECTION, DECEMBER 10, 2010, J.B. PARKS CENTER**

The year's program cycle concluded on a less somber note with the early December Holiday Fair and Children's Gift Collection, this year staged in the spacious ballroom of the Josephine Butler Parks Center on Fifteenth Street – a classic Washington mansion now home to a cluster of community organization serving the largely Latino districts of Adams Morgan and Mount Pleasant in northwest Washington. A solicitous crew of grown-ups hosted the crowd of eager children, the total well over 100 persons. A program of dances and singing performances by the children, followed by a lunch of cookies and hot dogs, set the stage for the appearance of Santa Claus. Arriving in full regalia, Santa, with booming Ho Ho, and talking very confidentially with the children in both flawless Spanish and English, held forth with a stream of anecdotes, exhortations, and queries what each would like for the holidays ahead. The children each picked up a toy for their own as the climax to the holiday exercises.

Dialogue on Diversity, an educational organization (tax exempt under §501(c)(3)), labors each year, and in a variety of programs, to impart useful information and ideas to a clientele of professional and business persons, women and men, public sector staff and executives, many staff persons from a variety of NGOs and think-tanks, all representing the facets of a many-cultured national existence. It is our hope to inspire serious and creative thought on a range of public issues affecting that clientele and our national community generally, so that, while Dialogue on Diversity remains steadfastly neutral in the political whirlwinds of the Capital, our friends and members may intelligently orient themselves in the civic discourse of our time and exercise their own influence for the general betterment. In addition to the large numbers of persons attending the Dialogue's programs, these each can be the carrier of the word to a growing circle of friends and colleagues, while the Dialogue's idea-filled newsletter is sent by e-mail to a growing circulation list now numbering in excess of 4,000 readers.

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Tel: [FfXVa] 703-631-0650, Fax: [FfXVa] 703-631-0617 dialog.div@prodigy.net www.dialogueondiversity.org Dialogue on Diversity is a 501(c)(3) Organization.
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