

FEZANA OPEN FORUM

The **FEZANA Open Forum**, first of its kind was held on Friday, May 25 at 6:00 pm at the AmeriSuites Conference Room in Tampa Bay, FL. Mahrukh Motafram, Vice president, chaired the session with the help of the executive board members Firdosh Mehta, Farrokh Mistree and Rita Engineer.

The main idea for an open forum is to get feedback from the community. It helped to listen to the voice of the people to better understand the issues facing the community. What we achieved at this forum was a panoramic view of ideas and suggestions that will enable us to pave a way for planning future FEZANA operations.

PART 1

Brainstorming activity

1. How can FEZANA improve upon its image within the community?
2. At present, there is lack of participation and interest for FEZANA. Why?
3. What are some projects that you feel FEZANA can be involved in the next decade?

At the beginning of the session each one in the audience was given the opportunity to speak on any of the above three questions. The audience comprised of association presidents, representatives, committee chairs and interested individuals. The youth were well represented by the committee chairs, Afreed Mistry and Freyaz Shroff along with the past chair Scherazade Mehta.

Below are the highlights from this activity:

- The religion receives little or no recognition outside the Z community; FEZANA can formulate a plan that can coordinate activities. Need to take pride in our religion.
- Iranian Z's are interested but do not feel welcome; we need to celebrate our diversity by preserving the core.
- Get the fringes involved; young adults in the age group between 30-40 years need to participate, effort must be made to include them together with the youth;
- Youth need to be empowered to do tasks they involved in since their ideas are critically challenged by adults; they need to be given leadership roles in FEZANA; bring a youth representative from each association to AGM's; adults need to talk to the youth at their level, need to trust more; get them involved in projects that are appealing to them; the youth need to be connected at college level; have college network, college guides; assist with employment.
- Need a strong internet/web presence as a communication tool; invest money on Website; electronic communication needs to be increased.
- 10,000 points of light need to be stretched to \$1 million points of light; need a strong financial foundation for the future; assistant treasurer can be added to the FEZANA executive
- FEZANA can have paid positions to do the work in the future
- Better communication within the community; ideas, projects to better assimilate in the larger community; encourage volunteerism within the local

community; have an outreach program involving humanitarian work through the UN.

- Power Point presentation about FEZANA
- Z's need to be clannish and support their own people to be successful
- Fezana needs to pay more attention to the religious side by actively supporting the need to create one place of worship, dadghah; build upon a strong infrastructure based on the teachings of Zarathushtra that will bind the community together; look into getting funds from the government; FEZANA can set up a forum to discuss this idea further at the 2004 North American Congress.

PART 2

ACTION ITEMS

From the brainstorming session, it was clear that FEZANA needs to be proactive in its approach to gain recognition. One way to achieve is to prepare a list of some potential projects that the community feels the need to participate in. The executive can play a leadership role in initiating projects by actively engaging interested individuals within the community to work with them on planning and implementing.

Listed below are action items:

- **INCREASE INVOLVEMENT**
 1. Increase Youth involvement by giving them leadership roles, encouraging youth reps to attend the meetings. One possibility that can be explored further is to make positions available to young adults during every elective term.
 2. Increase Iranian Zoroastrian participation by working together to celebrate cultural diversity.
- **FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
 3. FEZANA needs to raise funds for the future. The goal should be to raise \$1 million through the "1000 points of light program". Facilitate a position for an assistant Treasurer on the executive board to help with the finances.
 4. Work towards building a National FEZANA center.
- **RELIGIOUS**
 5. FEZANA needs to work towards building one place of worship, a Dadghah. Help raise funds through the community and look into getting funds from the government.
 6. Set up a forum for laying an infrastructure that is based upon unified religious principles; spirituality being the core that binds the Zarathushti community together.
- **MISCELLANEOUS**

7. Create a college network of Zarathushti's on campus that can help with guidance and employment opportunities for younger generation.
8. Electronic communication that includes a Power Point Presentation about FEZANA; should invest if need be to bring the communication tool into the 21st century.
9. Publicity and creating awareness needs to be addressed that will better communication within the community. Also, help assimilate in the bigger community.
10. Youth camps around North America to start with global youth camps in the near future.
11. Zarathushti Peace Corps working on humanitarian projects during summer time.

PART 3

Prioritized Projects

The audience voted on the projects based upon the need and urgency and of course preference. Each member in the audience was requested out of the total 11 projects to prioritize 3 projects total of their choice, 1 being the highest. Points were added and the results were tabulated:

<i>ACTION ITEMS</i>	<i>POINTS</i>	<i>RESULT</i>
1	22	1
2	7	1
3	8	6
4	6	7
5 & 6 combined	20	2
7	2	10
8	13	3
9	10	5
10	12	4
11	2	9

PART 4

RESULTS

At the end of the session, votes were counted and three main projects were highlighted. We need to keep in mind that this would be a collective effort on part of the entire Zarathushti community of North America. The FEZANA executive has taken the initiative to begin the process. It is up to the individuals to step up to the plate and help the executive implement this plan and bring it to fruition.

PROJECT 1

Since involvement and participation of both the young adult and Iranian Zarathushti's are key to better operations, #2 has been included as part of this project.

▪ *INCREASE INVOLVEMENT*

1. Increase Youth involvement by giving them leadership roles, encouraging youth reps to attend the meetings. Place upper limit on age that a person can serve on a local association board to increase participation.
2. Increase Iranian Zoroastrian participation by working together to celebrate cultural diversity

PROJECT 2

▪ *RELIGIOUS*

5. FEZANA needs to work towards building one place of worship, a Dadghah. Help raise funds through the community and look into getting funds from the government.
6. Set up a forum for laying an infrastructure that is based upon unified religious principles; spirituality being the core that binds the Zarathushti community together.

PROJECT 3

8. Electronic communication that includes a Power Point Presentation about FEZANA; should invest if need be to bring the communication tool into the 21st century.

In attendance:

Mehernosh Amroli	Houtoxi Contractor, ZAPA
Jamasp Daruwala, ZAF	Khushroo Daruwala, ZAF
Soli Dastoor, ZATAMBAY	Dolly Dastoor, ZAQ
Rita Engineer, ZAF	Homi Gandhi, ZAGNY
Navroz Irani, ZAF	Homi Italia, ZSBC
Ness Lakdawala, ZAQ	Rustom Kevala, ZAMWI
Jerry and Celeste Kheradi, ZAMWI	Khushru Lakdawala, ZAC
Zain Mavalvalla, ZSBC	Firdosh Mehta, Alberta
Scherazade Mehta, ZAGBA	Hosi Mehta ZAMC
Farrokh Mistree, AZA	Afreed Mistry, ZSO
Mahrukh Motafram, Milwaukee	Behram Pastakia, ZAMWI
Bomi Patel, ZAC	Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna, ZAMC
Freeyaz Shroff, ZSO	Percy Sidhwa, ZAF
Nazneen Spliedt, ZANC	Hoshi Tamboli, ZATAMBAY
Cyrus and Behnaz Toorkey, ZAPANJ	Sam Vesuna, ZSO
Kobad Zarolia, Ontario Zoroastrian Federation	

