“The IRC provides opportunities for refugees to thrive in America. Each year, thousands of refugees are invited by the U.S. government to seek safety and freedom. Forced to flee conflict or persecution, many have survived for years against incredible odds. They step off the plane with next to nothing but their dignity, hope and determination. In Boise and many other regional offices across the country, the IRC helps them rebuild their lives” (IRC, 2014).
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Executive Summary

- The International Rescue Committee’s Organization Overview consists of the organization’s mission statement, vision for the company, as well as information detailing its structure, size, statistics’ and some of the services it offers.

- Relevant publics in association with the International Rescue Committee are important to its ongoing success and are covered in detail in this report. There will also be information given accounting for both internal and external publics related to this organization.

- The Social Audit was completed through the use of 25 surveys that were conducted throughout the Boise State University Campus and within a company that does business in the Treasure Valley. The Survey and the statistics/data gathered are posted within this document.

- The Communication Audit for the International Rescue Committee is comprised of multiple media outlets as well as community, national and global outreach efforts, as well as a summary of some of the most current and/or recent coverage associated with the organization.

- The Analysis and Recommendation features the International Rescue Committee’s SWOT Analysis or Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the organization with emphasis on the major issues that the
International Rescue Committee faces. The recommendation given in this plan will be outlined herein.
Introduction

The following research and marketing plan was compiled by the members of Illustrious PR and is a public relations audit of the International Rescue Committee. The local chapter/office in Boise, along with national and global perspectives will be analyzed.

The purpose of this report is to do the following:

- Provide an overview of what the International Rescue Committee is and does
- Define and identify relevant publics along with their role within the International Rescue Committee’s influence
- Gather data using social and communication audits
- Analyze and evaluate how effective the International Rescue Committee’s public relations are and to provide recommendations for improvement in the organization

There are five main sections in this report:

- Organizational Overview
- Relevant Publics
- Social Audit
- Communication Audit
- Analysis and Recommendations
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Organizational Overview

Mission Statement:

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world’s worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. At work in over 40 countries and 22 U.S. cities to restore safety, dignity and hope, the IRC leads the way from harm to home.

Location:

International Rescue Committee is located locally at the following address with the following contact information:

- 7188 W Potomac Drive; Boise, ID 83704
- Tel: 208-344-1792
- Fax: 208-344-1795

National Headquarters is in New York City, NY USA
Established, Size, and Business Structure:

Founded in 1933, serves 40 countries and has offices in 22 US cities (IRC, 2014). This non-profit organization is set up much like the typical corporation in the US with a CEO, Board of Directors, followed by Overseers in many of the cities it serves. This organization serves, broadly, disaster relief victims, refugees, and war victims. In 2013, the IRC along with partnering organizations did the following:

- Provided **13 million** people with primary and reproductive health care
- Gave **1.4 million** people access to clean drinking water and sanitation
- Vaccinated over **276,000** children against disease; IRC-supported clinics and hospitals helped **272,000** women deliver healthy babies
- Provided schooling and educational opportunities to **725,000** girls and boys, and trained over **20,000** educators
- Provided counseling or cared for over **12,000** vulnerable children and provided skills training or access to financial services to another **12,000** young people
- Counseled and provided essential services to over **27,000** survivors of gender-based violence and educated and mobilized over **1,270,000** men, women and children to lead prevention efforts in their communities
- Created **226** village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) that benefited some **14,000** members in 8 countries
- Provided **172,000** farmers with agricultural or agribusiness training
- Provided legal assistance to more than **20,000** people through IRC-supported legal centers
- Through our Resettlement Support Center in Thailand, the IRC assisted over **16,500** refugees who departed from camps and cities in East Asia to enter United States and build new lives with help from the IRC and sister resettlement agencies
- In the United States, the IRC helped resettle some **8,700** newly arrived refugees and provided services to promote self-reliance and integration to over **38,000** refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking and other immigrants (IRC, 2014)

Products/Services Offered:

Newly arrived refugees receive much of the following: A home, help with rent, health care, nutritious, affordable food, English language classes, help with job, computer and language skills, education for children, social services and support as well as legal services (IRC, 2014).
Relevant Publics

The internal publics of the International Rescue Committee are essential to the success and ongoing work of this organization. “In the US, we have 24 offices that just deal with refugee resettlement. We are the largest resettlement organization in Idaho and the only secular one (no church affiliation). The other two agencies in Boise are World Relief and Agency for New Americans” (Davis-Jones, 2014). In this organization there are internal employees and volunteers that make up internal publics. The refugees, community, media, other organizations and government agencies make up the external publics. The public is a latent public in relation to who the IRC is and what they do for the communities in which they serve. In order of power ranking:

Employees/Volunteers:

“In Boise, we have 16 employees and around 35 very involved volunteers at all times. Then we have interns and Service Learning students from area colleges and universities and this numbers around 32 per semester” (Davis-Jones, 2014).

Other Orgs & Government publics:

Other non-profit organizations in Boise such as “World Relief and the Agency for New Americans” (Davis-Jones, 2014) assist with resettlement in Idaho for refugees and support the International Rescue Committee’s efforts. The “IRC also works with the Boise Bike Project to get bikes to every person that needs one for transportation” (Davis-Jones, 2014). There are also government officials that advocate for immigration reform.

Community:

The communities in which there are offices for the International Rescue Committee serve not only the non-profit organization by contributing both financially but also with services, are members of the external public for this organization. The IRC receives donations locally and on a global level. The IRC Boise recognizes those that contribute monies and services. Here is an example of such recognition from the IRC’s 2013 Annual Report (IRC Annual Report - Steven Manning, 2013).
Refugees:

Our clients come from Iraq, Burma (Mynamar), Bhutan and several countries in Africa (Dem. Rep. of Congo, Somalia, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Burundi and several other countries depending on the time and situation). From time to time we have Afghans and Uzbeks too. We serve about 300 individuals a year. Then the other two agencies receive about 200 people each” (Davis-Jones, 2014).
Social Audit

A social audit was conducted on the Boise State University campus as well as other various locations around the Boise area. Included in the survey were demographic questions along with the following:

- Have you heard of (name of org): The International Rescue Committee (IRC)?
- What is the first thing you think of when you hear International Rescue Committee?
- How did you hear about the International Rescue Committee?
- Please tell us what you know about the International Rescue Committee?
- Have you used services from the International Rescue Committee?
- Do you know somebody who has used services from International Rescue Committee?
- What kind of reputation does International Rescue Committee have on campus?
- What is your opinion of the International Rescue Committee?

- Are you a student?
  - Yes 17/25 – 68%
  - No 8/25 – 32%

- Of the students, what grade in school?
  - Freshman – 1/17 – 6%
  - Sophomore – 13/17 – 76.4%
  - Junior – 3/17 – 17.6%
  - Senior – 0/17 – 0%

- Major in School for (17 Students Surveyed)
  - Chemistry
  - Communication & Management
  - History
  - Health Science
  - Elementary Education
  - Mechanical Engineering
  - Biology
  - Psychology
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- Undecided
- Business & Accounting
- Civil Engineering

- Have you heard of the IRC?
  - Yes - 2/25 – 8%
  - No - 23/25 – 92%

- Age?
  - 18-24: 17 – 68%
  - 25-34: 1 – 4%
  - 35-42: 3 – 12%
  - 43-50: 2 – 8%
  - 56-64: 1 – 4%
  - 65-72: 1 – 4%

- Sex?
  - Female – 16 – 64%
  - Male – 9 – 36%

92% of those surveyed did not have knowledge of what the IRC is and what it does. Of the two respondents that knew about the IRC, one had a negative impression of the organization and the other was neutral. The one that had the negative perception advised that the organization takes money from local citizens in need.
Communication Audit

The Communication Audit for the International Rescue Committee is comprised of multiple media outlets as well as community, national and global outreach efforts, as well as a summary of some of the most current and/or recent coverage associated with the organization.

The communication climate, or “the degree of trust and openness that exists in the communication processes of an organization” (Dan Lattimore, 2012). The IRC has multiple outlets for creating public perception however, according to the organization and to those surveyed for this report, knowledge of what the IRC does and is, is not very widespread. In an interview with one of the representatives in the local office for the International Rescue Committee, communication with the public was questioned. The response given was:

“Sometimes people don’t realize that these people were forced from their countries, that they can’t return and that they have left everything and everyone they have known, along with dealing with major trauma, perhaps rape, torture and starvation. They are not “economic immigrants” who just come for a better life; they are here because of situations in their countries. The public often does not realize that they are only allowed to receive financial aid from the agencies for up to 8 months, then they are supposed to be self-sufficient. So we get them into English classes and help them attain jobs, and we have a 91% placement rate. They are immediately work eligible and so employers need to know that there will be no issues with the immigration services. There is so much more that the public doesn’t realize, there’s not enough time in my day now to go through all of them” (Davis-Jones, 2014).

The IRC relies mainly on the internet and its website for media coverage and updates. The following is an example and screenshot taken from the organizations news/media webpage that provides updated news and print media communication to the public (IRC, 2014):
KBOI, a local television and news station in the Boise area has published articles that talk about the positive impact of the International Rescue Committee’s efforts. As recently as August of 2014, the following article supported the IRC’s involvement in helping those in crisis (Pace, 2014):

“The International Rescue Committee said it was providing emergency medical care for up to 4,000 dehydrated Yazidis, mostly women and children, who survived without food
or water for up to six days hiding in the Sinjar mountains before fleeing to a refugee camp in Syria, where a civil war is raging” (Pace, 2014).

The International Rescue Committee also is mentioned in a local paper in Boise, Idaho. The Idaho Statesman posted an article regarding aid for a recent national Ebola outbreak (Achenbach, 2014):

Media:

The media coverage for this organization plays a vital role in assisting it with its outreach efforts, gaining funding and driving awareness. The IRC posts some sort of media coverage or article on a daily basis on their local and international websites. Keeping a strong relationship with media outlets is important. The IRC has the following media team:

- International Rescue Committee experts around the world and in their hubs in London, Brussels, New York and Washington are on-call to provide information and interviews about their global humanitarian aid and refugee resettlement programs as well as priority issues and policies that impact the people they assist. The IRC also deploys professional and staff photographers to shoot their work and the crises they respond to.
  - Lucy Carrigan (New York – covers US refugee resettlement and general media inquiries)
o Oliver Money (New York – covers David Miliband media inquiries, Syria Regional Response, Pakistan, and Afghanistan)
o Paul Donohoe (London – covers international programs)
o Hadeel Al-Shalchi (Beirut/Amman– covers Syria Regional Response)
o Peter Biro (Bangkok – covers international programs)
o Sophia Jones (Nairobi – covers Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe)

Communication with the external public locally and nationally is a daily task for the IRC and the bulk of the communication in the media and with the external publics is supportive of the organization and its efforts.
**Analysis & Recommendation**

After reviewing the interview, the organizations website and the survey results, a S.W.O.T analysis was conducted on the International Rescue Committee.

**Strengths:**

Some of the I.R.C's strengths are that they have a good solid work force and thanks to Boise State's service learning program a constant flow of volunteer workers to help them year around. With 24 field offices throughout the United States and abundant media coverage the people who are in need of help know who to turn too. They are providing a needed service to the community, by educating the refugees on how to assimilate into our culture.

**Weaknesses:**

When reviewing the social audit results it was found that 23 of the 25 people hadn’t actually heard of the I.R.C. Also, currently they are only set up to handle about 300 refugees per year which can hinder growth. In addition, as we saw in the survey results local media attention is another area of opportunity. Another weakness is finding locations for refugees to live that are close to bus stops to provide transportation for refugees.

**Opportunities for Growth:**

There are many opportunities for the IRC. The student learning chapter of Boise state which is increasing the amount of students getting involved and is partnering up with Boise State is going to increase the awareness of the organization which will help get its name out more. Also, with the increase in awareness there will be need for growth, and with the funds and increased number of volunteers they will have reason to increase the number of refugees which they can support.

**Threats:**

There are a few threats that pose issue to the IRC, for instance if they are unable to find housing for the refugees that are walking distance from the bus lines, refugees will be unable to find transportation to work and to complete daily tasks. Also if people fail to educate themselves on the reasons why these refugees are forced to leave their countries and fail to be socially aware then there is little chance those affected by natural disaster or war won’t have a place to come in order to live, in other words, their basic human rights will not exist.
References


