Rapid Refugee Services Assessment (RRSA)

Report of findings on childcare services, training and transportation assistance in Arizona

Submitted to the Arizona Department of Economic Security
Community Service Administration,
Refugee Resettlement Program (ADES-CSA/RRP)

Research conducted by the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA),
The University of Arizona

Revised April 29, 2003

BARA Research team:

Mamadou Baro, Principal Investigator
Mette Brogden
Della Burke
Allison Davis
Erin Dean
Tim Finan
Renee Goodwin
Judy Longbottom, Co-Investigator
Sylvie Morel-Seytoux, Co-Investigator
Fernando Moyle
Eric Pavri
Marie Sardier
Mohamadou Thiam
Rainy Warf

Acknowledgments

This report incorporates a tremendous amount of effort by a large number of people, each of whom played a critical role in the success of this study. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Camille Kowal and Charles Shipman of the Arizona Department of Economic Security Community Service Administration, Refugee Resettlement Program (ADES-CSA/RRP), and the representatives of the resettlement agencies who offered not only their expertise and dedication, but also their friendship during a very intense fieldwork project. We would like to thank all those who took time from their busy schedules to provide feedback for the study.

Finally, our greatest debt of gratitude is to the refugees, themselves, who so warmly offered their hospitality and participation. Despite the interruptions that we caused in their daily routines, they gave us valuable insights, shared their experiences, and became our partners in research. We hope that this effort will make a difference in achieving successful refugee resettlement in Arizona. To all of these people, we reiterate our sincere thanks and acknowledge their respective contributions to our study.

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List of Acronyms

ADES-CSA/RRP	Arizona Department of Economic Security Community Service Administration, Refugee Resettlement Program
DES	Department of Economic Security
BARA	Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology
BICAS	Bicycle Inter-Community Art and Salvage program
CBO	Community Based Organization
CMA	Certified Medical Assistant
CTAA	Community Transportation Association of America
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Educational Development
IDA	Individual Development Account
ISA	Interagency Service Agreement
JARC	Job Access and Reverse Commute Program
MAA	Mutual Assistance Association
MSC	Maricopa Skills Center
OSP	Other Service Providers
RFP	Request for Proposal
RRP	Refugee Resettlement Program
RRSA	Rapid Refugee Services Assessment
RTAP	Refugee Targeted Assistance Program
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
VOLAG	Voluntary Agency

Executive Summary

The Bureau of Applied Anthropology (BARA) of the University of Arizona was selected by the Refugee Resettlement Program of the Arizona Department of Economic Security to identify potential use by refugees of, and operational considerations for, a childcare center/subsidy program, a training assistance/subsidy program, and a vehicle purchase/repair/insurance assistance program. To provide important contextual background, the BARA research team further explored the current situation, service needs, and preferences of the refugee populations and refugee-serving organizations in Phoenix and Tucson.

The Rapid Refugee Services Assessment (RRSA) included a total of **20** interviews with refugee-serving organizations (seven in Tucson, 13 in Phoenix), and **11** refugee focus groups (five in Tucson, six in Phoenix), for a total of **69** refugees interviewed. Highlights of findings are summarized below.

Childcare

- The BARA study clearly found that access to quality childcare service is of significant concern for the vast majority of refugees participating in this study. Our findings suggest that the best solutions need to be flexible, culturally sensitive, and include financial assistance.
- Currently most refugees utilize informal, unpaid childcare mechanisms that greatly impact the time and resources of refugee parents and extended refugee families. The constraints to securing adequate childcare include financial, institutional, cultural, and logistical considerations.
- Approximately three-fourths of the refugee focus groups and nearly half of the refugee-serving organizations approved a proposal for a refugee childcare center. From this subset emerged two different suggestions: (1) a single centralized multi-ethnic center for the entire community; or (2) multiple smaller centers serving individual refugee communities.
- Other suggestions include adding refugees to the staffs of existing commercial centers; increasing provision for RTAP or a similar Program; increasing childcare provision within refugee-serving organizations; assistance for formalizing some informal childcare arrangements, such as certifying in-home childcare facilities; and increasing education and training in the area of childcare.
- Most importantly, refugees must be able to choose which childcare option would work best for them, and offering a *choice* of childcare alternatives would be more useful that any pre-determined program.

Training

- For refugees, competence in English, training that builds skills useful for the job market, and (for many) validation of professional skills acquired in their countries of origin are crucial elements to becoming productive members of American society. Existing programs aid in accomplishing these goals, but significant obstacles still block access to effective and useful training for many refugees.
- The most-cited constraint was a lack of the necessary English skills to take advantage of training opportunities. Data from this research supports the perceived need for increased emphasis on English training, as respondents identify language skills as the key to all other doors of opportunity and adjustment.
- Additional emphasis on skills assessment during the initial resettlement phases would improve the ability of refugee-serving organizations to target the English and job-specific training needs of refugees.
- On the job training represents one method for meeting training needs while adhering to federal mandates to encourage refugees to work within the first few months.

- Flexible hours, consideration of refugees' transportation challenges, and provision for childcare are necessary to improving the effectiveness of training programs.
- Finally, this research suggests assisting highly-skilled refugees with re-credentialing in their former professions would significantly benefit both refugees and American society as a whole.

Transportation

- In both Pima and Maricopa Counties, refugees must travel long distances to reach workplaces or service centers by public transportation or in private vehicles. The unavailability, inaccessibility, or unreliability of transportation, coupled with extreme heat during the summer months, causes difficulty for refugees, particularly the elderly and those who travel with children.
- The primary mode of transportation for refugees in the first year is the bus system, although some refugees use bicycles soon after arrival and others walk. Many refugees, however, are able to take advantage of carpooling and van service offered by refugee service providers, community based organizations or a select number of employers.
- Cost issues are a serious obstacle to car ownership. Other obstacles include car dealers who take advantage of the refugee's situation and offer high interest rates, or substandard cars, and unfamiliarity with American credit systems.
- Nearly half of refugee focus groups and one-third of responses from interviews with organizations favored the proposed vehicle purchase program, but the same proportion preferred a program that offers low-interest loans. Some organizations suggested upgrading transportation provisions to help refugees get to work (especially during their initial months as Arizona residents). Another suggested option was an "approved" car dealer program, or alternatively, a single nonprofit agency could become the primary outlet for vehicles. This type of "approved garage" for repairs was also suggested.
- The BARA research team offers several recommendations: Support current practices to assist refugees early on, promoting ride-to-work programs and formalizing the existing practice of informal ride assistance. Assist in establishing public-private partnerships that encourage employers to play a greater role in providing transportation for the refugees among their employees. Training, especially driver's training is considered especially important.
- In sum, transportation solutions offered by respondents include four main components: A combined training/car purchase program; a low-interest loan program; an "approved garage" program and/or nonprofit agency specializing in buying and selling used cars; and additional multifaceted training for drivers and prospective drivers.

Overarching Themes

- Findings suggest that extending the period of orientation, including greater opportunity for English immersion classes, would be of great benefit to long term refugee self sufficiency.
- Likewise, enhancing mechanisms for communication between different refugee service providers, refugees, and organizations in the wider community is recommended, such as police who may encounter refugees in their daily operations.
- Finally, this report recommends finding ways through funding structures to encourage collaboration and foster two-way communication so that refugee services are able to continually progress and improve.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

The ability of refugee service administrators and providers to evolve with the changing needs of diverse refugee populations is key in creating the high quality of programming currently available in Arizona. Uncertainty over future resettlement allocations and an economy in recession with a shrinking job market heightens the need for high quality, efficiently run services. The state has identified three key areas of need for refugees, including childcare, training and transportation. These are areas of need that if not addressed during the first years after arrival, can cause long-term, reverberating effects for refugees. Childcare is a serious concern for refugee families with young children, especially those who do not have reliable family networks for support. Access to training programs is limited by financial costs, time and language barriers, while transportation is a major factor limiting access to employment, childcare, training opportunities, and other essential needs.

A number of the problems affecting refugee households are universal across populations, and these factors might be more easily addressed by service providers. At the same time, looking for commonalities risks over-generalizing for a population that is very vulnerable and heterogeneous. An assessment that attempts to capture both the range of experience across refugee populations, as well as common needs, serves the interest of both refugees and refugee-serving organizations alike. As such, the Refugee Resettlement Program of the Arizona Department of Economic Security has entered into contract with the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology of the University of Arizona to conduct a third party assessment of refugee needs in the area of childcare services, training and transportation assistance, in an effort to better understand both the range and overlap in experience for refugees.

B. Objectives of the study

The Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) states the following as their mission: "Through the coordination of public and private resources, the Program promotes successful refugee resettlement through contracts and direct services that effectively use social services formula and discretionary, targeted assistance, and cash and medical assistance grants to best enable refugees to achieve social and economic self-sufficiency." With this objective in mind, RRP has identified three refugee needs in the Phoenix and Tucson refugee resettlement areas that require further understanding, namely childcare services, training, and transportation assistance.

The Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA) was selected to conduct this study on behalf of ADES-CSA/RRP. As outlined in the Interagency Service Agreement (ISA), the primary objective of the report is to serve as a means to identify potential use by refugees of, and operational considerations for, a childcare center/subsidy program, a training assistance/subsidy program, and a vehicle purchase/repair/insurance assistance program. As specified within the ISA, data is provided in the form of (a) aggregate responses from refugee-serving organizations; and (b) aggregate responses from refugee focus groups (both within the geographical areas of Phoenix and Tucson), for each of the above items.

However, beyond the requirements within the ISA, the BARA research team chose to further explore the current situation, service needs, and preferences of the refugee populations and refugee-serving organizations in Phoenix and Tucson to provide important contextual background to consider the issues in a holistic framework. As a result, many creative ideas and thoughts shared by representatives from the 20 organizational representatives, and 69 individual refugees interviewed, were brought to the surface as part of this project. It is our hope that this effort will serve to support the committed and sincere efforts of RRP toward improving the quality and success of refugee resettlement efforts in Arizona.

Findings are provided within each technical chapter (childcare, training and transportation), but also, common themes and cross-cutting findings are highlighted in the report. A detailed review of the methodology utilized by the BARA research team is provided in Chapter II (see Methodology section).

C. Background and history of refugee resettlement in Arizona

This section provides contextual background reflecting upon service provision for refugees in the state of Arizona. Background information is presented in the form of a brief history of refugee resettlement in the state, followed by a description of how refugee services are currently provided by refugee-serving organizations. Final sections review how eligibility is determined according to the different categories of immigrants living in the United States, followed by a description of the various categories of refugees that provide particular challenges for service provision.

The resettlement of refugees in the state of Arizona has been occurring, in various forms, since 1975. In 1980, the Refugee Act formalized the initial ad-hoc policies and programs that had been created to accommodate the arrival of many Indo-Chinese refugees. This legislation established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), responsible for federal policy-making and state level administration and liaison with voluntary agencies (VOLAGs). While this basic framework remains, there have been subsequent adjustments in the delivery of services to refugees in the context of a federal goal of promoting economic self-sufficiency among refugees.

Changes to refugee service provision within the state of Arizona have historically been driven by federal mandates and funding, or in response to dramatic changes in the number of refugees being resettled. The arrival of large populations over a short time has necessitated re-evaluations of the effectiveness of the program for the given demand (e.g. Indo-Chinese in the 1970s, Bosnians in the mid-1990s, and Africans in the late 1990s and early 2000s). The Refugee Resettlement Program of Arizona is now in the process of re-evaluating current programs during a period of reduced refugee arrivals and aims, in particular, to address the expressed needs of greater provision for childcare, training and transportation. Although a dramatic decrease in numbers of refugee arrivals in the state has been seen since September 11, 2001, there is concern that the service delivery infrastructure should be supported to maintain a solid foundation for the future.

D. The structure of refugee service provision in Arizona

Initial services are provided to refugees through resettlement agencies (VOLAGs). There are four main resettlement agencies currently operating in Phoenix, including Betania Community Center, Catholic Social Service, International Rescue Committee, and Lutheran Social Ministry. In Tucson, there are also four VOLAGs, including Jewish Family and Children's Services, Catholic Community Service, International Rescue Committee and Lutheran Social Ministry. Each of these VOLAGs is associated with one or more national voluntary agencies, which are themselves associated with international agencies (sometimes being part of the same organization, but this is not always the case). For instance, IRC has offices and staff based in the U.S. as well as internationally -- including some directly within resettlement camps overseas. Another VOLAG, Lutheran Social Ministry in Phoenix, works somewhat differently in that the organization works in liaison with two national voluntary agencies, including Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and Church World Service. Ten of these national voluntary agencies work together at federal level to manage the allocations of incoming refugees to local VOLAGs and have cooperative agreements with the Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Another category of refugee-serving organizations includes community-based organizations (CBOs). CBOs vary in the degree to which they are formalized, depending on whether they have obtained mutual assistance association (MAA) status in accordance with ORR regulations. All the refugee-serving organizations interviewed for the study, other than VOLAGs and OSPs, have obtained MAA status -- and are thereby eligible to receive federal and state funds. Regardless of their status, CBOs function as cultural networks and provide an often invaluable source of support to refugees by linking newly arrived refugees with others from their country of origin, or ethnic background. These organizations play an important role in providing services to refugees, some of which are formalized and financed through grants, and others which are provided on a voluntary basis.

Many of the refugee respondents in the BARA study commented on their appreciation for essential services, such as transportation and childcare, often being provided on an ad-hoc, voluntary basis by CBOs. CBOs were also recognized for their support in carrying out essential interpretation services, for instance, being available on weekends when a refugee finds him/herself having difficulty with the police and is unable to contact a caseworker from a resettlement agency. Often the CBOs will maintain contact with refugees long after they have ceased their relationships with the resettlement agencies.

E. Refugees and other eligible immigrant populations

The refugee population in Arizona encompasses a wide variety of countries of origin, ethnic affiliations, and ranges in age, gender and household size. Many refugees have experienced considerable trauma prior to arrival, and there has been a fairly recent increased emphasis on providing psychiatric and psychological assistance through mental health programming. Equally important, an increasing number of refugees are arriving with physical disabilities, sometimes sustained as a result of war. Each state has been given the authority to restructure its programming in response to the composition of its caseload, including these types of "special cases." More recent arrivals have included an increasing number of single women from Afghanistan, often accompanied by many children. They often no longer have husbands, brothers or fathers due to the war. These diverse categories of refugees present major challenges for service providers, especially given the achievement of economic self-sufficiency as a primary goal. These refugees will need significant assistance in the areas of childcare, transportation and training.

Although this study targets those with official refugee status, it is important to recognize that there are other categories of immigrants, for which eligibility to obtain refugee services varies depending on a range of criteria. For instance, Cubans and Haitian entrants are able to apply for refugee status upon arrival to the U.S. Asylum seekers arriving in the U.S. can receive some services that are provided by voluntary organizations such as the Asylum Program of Southern Arizona in Tucson, however, they are typically unable to access any refugee social services until their application for asylum status has been approved. These asylees can then access all services provided by VOLAGs (with the exception of the Reception and Placement service). Asylees can also enroll for assistance under the Matching Grant Program, with an enrollment time limitation requiring application within 30 days after receiving asylum status.

The BARA team was told that when there are "normal" numbers of refugee arrivals, the Matching Grant Program cannot be provided for all refugees. Due to the unusually low number of refugee arrivals in the U.S. following the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, however, some asylees are currently enrolled and benefiting from this program. It should also be noted that there exists a large population of undocumented immigrants, many from Central America, living in Tucson and Phoenix. While these immigrants are able to qualify for some welfare services, they are not eligible for services specified for refugees. Albeit very limited, they receive a small amount of support from the voluntary sector.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Overview

The Rapid Refugee Services Assessment (RRSA) included a total of **20** interviews with organizations (seven in Tucson, 13 in Phoenix), and **11** refugee focus groups (five in Tucson, six in Phoenix), for a total of **69** refugees interviewed. All interviews were conducted in person, except for one which was carried out by phone.

Interviews were conducted with diverse types of refugee-serving organizations, including Refugee Resettlement Agencies (four in Tucson, four in Phoenix), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) (one in Tucson, five in Phoenix), and Other Service Providers (OSPs) (two in Tucson, four in Phoenix).

Table II-A.1 and A.2 provides a complete list of all interviews with organizations and refugee focus groups for the study. Information on individual refugees is broken down by age group (youth, adult, and older adult); sex (male or female); and country of origin.

B. Project design and monitoring processes

The five-week project was conducted in two phases: Phase I in Tucson, and Phase II in Phoenix. At the outset, the study was carefully designed to allow for the optimal use of lessons learned to be quickly applied to the team's ongoing work. The project design, staffing, implementation process, and emphasis on participatory methods, included the placement of several strategic "markers" or "check points," to allow for this rapid learning/application process to unfold effectively. Some of processes utilized are outlined below.

1. Pre-testing: Pilot interviews with organizations and refugee focus groups were conducted to pre-test the quality of the two surveys developed, as well as to pre-test the research team's interviewing skills and techniques. This served as an effective means of obtaining important feedback at the earliest stages of research, allowing for substantive revisions to be made to both the survey format, as well as strengthening individual interviewing techniques.

2. Phasing: The project was specifically divided into two distinct phases (Phase I: Tucson; Phase II: Phoenix), to allow for a comprehensive all-team feedback session on key lessons learned after the completion of Phase I. Several adjustments and revisions were made prior to commencing Phase II in Phoenix, resulting in improvements in the quality and effectiveness of the team's data collection efforts.

3. Multidisciplinary approach: The BARA research team was a *multidisciplinary* group of 16 individuals (seven males and nine females), offering to the study a diversity of language skills, academic backgrounds, and professional and international experience. Included were several senior faculty with expertise in urban development, psychotherapy, multi-stakeholder policy development, organizational development, conflict resolution, and employee assistance counseling; doctoral students with expertise in statistical analysis and anthropological methods; seasoned professionals with specializations in international development, and women in development, as well as area studies training and field work experience in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia; staff with unique, community and youth program development experience; and graduate and undergraduate students conducting research on refugee issues and urban planning.

Given the importance of cross cultural understanding to this study, it proved especially useful that several team members hold anthropology degrees, and that their professional portfolios include Peace Corps

service or short- and long-term international assignments. Some on the team came to the study having previously worked on refugee affairs in the U.S. or in an overseas setting.

C. Survey instruments/tools of analysis

Several survey instruments and tools of analysis were developed for the RRSA project. Each of these is briefly described below.

1. Survey for Organizations (see Attachment I - A)

The survey for organizations was designed to elicit information required by the ISA while at the same time allowing for flexibility of response. As a neutral assessment, all questions were open-ended to accommodate the broadest range of responses possible and to encourage respondents to propose creative solutions. One-third of the questions solicited quantitative data -- actual numbers or estimated proportions of responses, depending on the organization.

2. Topical Outline for Refugee Focus Group Discussions (see Attachment I - B)

Refugee focus groups were conducted using a semi-structured topical outline. For consistency, this outline was formal in the sense that the topic of discussion, the pace, and the duration of the focus group were determined by the outline. Although discussions were flexible enough to address the pressing concerns of the refugees, facilitators made sure to include all aspects of the outline.

3. Matrix of Findings from Interviews with Organizations (see Attachment I - C)

For each survey conducted with an organization, primary findings were synthesized and entered in a matrix table format (a comprehensive table covering various topics). The matrices permitted easy identification of common themes across surveys, and served as a check-point to ensure that the most critical data was captured from each interview. Primary findings, or the "raw data" were also made available for analysis.

4. Matrix of Findings from Refugee Focus Groups (see Attachment I - D)

For each refugee focus group interview conducted, primary findings were synthesized from the detailed topical outline, and entered into a matrix. Again, this step facilitated the identification of common themes across focus group interviews. Primary findings, or the "raw data" were also made available for analysis.

D. Units of analysis

Several units of analysis guided the BARA team's collection and processing of data. These included feedback from *individual* refugees; feedback from representatives of *organizations* (VOLAGs, OSPs, and CBOs); and feedback from refugee focus *groups*. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from each "unit of analysis;" however, representatives of refugee resettlement agencies supplied the majority of the quantitative data. This was the case because VOLAGs perform formal client-based service delivery functions, and most already have basic data gathering systems in place.

It is critical to note, however, that these *data gathering systems differed greatly between VOLAGs*, in terms of *definitions* (such as the definition of an "open" case), as well as the *type, timing, frequency, and quantity* of data gathered. Therefore, the accuracy of the quantitative data utilized in this study is subject to the variability of data collection methodologies utilized by each refugee-serving organization. This situation limits the comparability of quantitative data. Nevertheless, the BARA team relied on its

collective expertise to establish "best estimates" of quantitative data available for assessment and to analyze it consistently.

Data was sorted and analyzed to highlight trends *within the refugee populations in Tucson and Phoenix*; *to capture geographic variability* (between Tucson and Phoenix); and to identify and compare perspectives *among and between* individual refugees, representatives of organizations, and refugee focus groups. Further, trends and variability within and between *ethnic groups*, were also analyzed and these findings are woven throughout the report. Finally, *gender considerations* were taken into account for each unit of analysis, and the most significant results of their analysis are highlighted in the report.

E. Statistical methodology

Quantitative data from the eight VOLAG surveys were entered into a spreadsheet and used to estimate current refugee practices and demand for proposed services. These organizations provided rough estimates (proportions or percentages) of the general refugee population in Pima and Maricopa Counties. Therefore the specificity of this report's findings and analysis is limited by the precision of our respondents. The charts and graphs in the report illustrate what respondents reported to the team. In other words, the quantitative data are representative of responses to questions by organizations, groups, and individuals.

F. Selection criteria for refugee focus group participation

The BARA team chose individual refugees to participate in the refugee focus group interviews utilizing a combination of *ideal selection criteria,* as listed below. It should be noted that a majority of the refugees were contacted through the efforts of the staff of various refugee resettlement agencies. While the team provided staff members with ideal selection criteria, given the short time-frame of the study, issues such as convenience and availability understandably influenced the selection process.

Nevertheless, the BARA team was pleased with the final outcome: diverse populations of refugees being represented, as well as a solid mix of gender and age groups. The BARA team's ideal refugee focus group selection criteria were as follows:

1. Gender: Male and female representation within each focus group, unless the group was identified as male-or female-only.

2. Age: Mixed representation of three age-categories of youth, adults, and older adults.

3. Country of origin and/or ethnicity: Diversity of country of origin and ethnic backgrounds to parallel the refugee population demographics in Tucson and Phoenix.

4. Availability: Interviews were scheduled around the refugee population's specific time and location constraints, so that those who might normally be constrained by childcare, classes or work would be able to participate. As such, interviews were scheduled between classes, during lunch hours, on the weekend, in the evenings, at both resettlement agencies or places of training and in homes, depending on times most convenient for selected participants. Interviews typically lasted for two hours. Refugees were compensated for any transportation costs, not only in an effort to ensure their participation, but also as a gesture of good will on the part of the research team in appreciation for their time.

5. Length of residence in the U.S.: Preference was for the identification of refugees who had lived in the U.S. *at least six months.* These groups tend to be more settled and familiar with the realities of U.S. life,

and thus are in a better position to provide in-depth feedback on the topics of primary concern to the study.

6. Refugee status: Preference was given to those with currently holding legal refugee status. A secondary group which participated included individuals who were admitted as refugees but have since had adjusted status, who could speak on behalf of their past experiences, and that of the refugee community with which they most closely associate.

7. Language/translation: As much as possible, translation was arranged ahead of time, which typically took the form of an available staff member within a resettlement agency who helped to contact the participating refugees. In some instances, bilingual members of the BARA team utilized their individual foreign language skills to translate or clarify questions and responses.

8. Family status: An effort was made to capture the diversity of needs which vary greatly depending on whether a refugee is single, married or a parent. Therefore, included in the study were married couples with (and without) children, single parents (both male and female), single adults, as well as youth and elderly people.

G. Types of refugee focus groups

Sixty-nine (69) individual refugees were organized into focus groups. The BARA team made an effort to keep the focus groups *small*, ideally groups of four to five refugees with two facilitators. In total, the 11 focus groups included the following break-out categories, divided evenly between Tucson and Phoenix (with the exception of the only "all male" focus group conducted in Phoenix).

- Six mixed focus groups (diversity of ages, gender, ethnic backgrounds)
- Two all-women focus groups (mixed age and ethnicity)
- One all-male focus group (mixed age and ethnicity)
- Two student or "in-training" oriented groups (mixed age and ethnicity)

As discussed above, given the time-frame of the project, BARA relied on the staff of refugee resettlement agencies to organize the focus group participants. This constraint meant that it was often the immediate availability of refugees that determined participation, rather than the ideal criteria provided by the BARA team to ensure broad representation of the refugee population. This resulted at times with having very recently arrived refugees (one month or less) participating in the focus groups with the consequent constraints of language and limited practical experience on issues of childcare, training and transportation from which to draw.

It should be noted that of the six focus groups in Phoenix, two comprised single ethnic representation of the Kurdish and Laotian communities, and one group had the feature of entirely representing disabled refugees and those caring for their disabled refugee relatives. Given these specificities were not planned, research findings were influenced by these variations from the team's ideal selection criteria for refugee focus group participation.

H. Demographic representation of refugee populations within the study

Among the 69 individual refugees interviewed, the world regions and countries of origin represented were:

Central Asian Republics: Afghanistan
Eastern Europe and The Former Soviet Union: Bosnia, Croatia, Ukraine, Russia

Middle East: Iran, Iraq, Turkey (Kurdish originating from all three countries)
Southeast Asia: Laos
Sub Saharan Africa: Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Namibia, Liberia, Mali, Burundi.

In addition, many of the representatives from organizations (resettlement agency and association staff) originally arrived in the U.S. as refugees, and have since become U.S. citizens. Their interview feedback was substantive both with respect to their own experiences, and that of others within their ethnic/country of origin refugee community. Consequently, the following countries/regions of origin were also represented within the study: Angola, Vietnam, several Former Soviet Union countries, and several countries within the former Yugoslavia.

Table II - A.1

Interviews conducted with refugee-serving organizations and refugee focus groups in Tucson

Phase I: Tucson

Interviews with Organizations (Conducted a total of seven interviews in Tucson)

A. Resettlement Agencies

1. Jewish Family and Children Services of Southern Arizona
2. International Rescue Committee
3. Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona
4. Lutheran Social Ministry

B. Other Service Providers (OSPs)

5. Pima College Adult Education
6. Tucson International Alliance of Refugee Communities

C. Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

7. Vietnamese Former Political Prisoners Association

Refugee Focus Groups (Conducted five focus groups, totaling 27 refugees in Tucson)

1. Mixed group of five refugees, including: Sierra Leone -1 adult male; Sudan - 1 adult male; Congo -1 adult male; Russia - 2 adult females.

2. Mixed group of six refugees, including: Afghanistan - 1 adult female; Sudan - 1 male youth; Bosnia - 1 adult male; Bosnia - 1 older male; Namibia - 1 adult female; Iraq -1 adult male.

3. All-women's group of three refugees, including: Afghanistan - 1 adult female; Somalia - 1 adult female; Iran - 1 older female.

4. Student/In-training group of five refugees, including: Mali - 1 older female; Vietnam - 1 adult female; Ukraine - 1 adult female; Afghanistan - 1 adult female; Bosnia - 1 adult male.

5. Mixed group of eight refugees, including: Congo - 1 adult male; Afghanistan - 1 adult female; Afghanistan -3 adult females; Ukraine - 1 adult male; Bosnia - 1 adult female; Burundi - 1 adult female.

Table II - A.2

Interviews conducted with refugee-serving organizations and refugee focus groups in Phoenix

Phase II. Phoenix

Interviews with Organizations (Conducted a total of 13 interviews in Phoenix)

A. Resettlement Agencies
   1. Betania Community Center
   2. Catholic Social Services of Phoenix, Inc.
   3. International Rescue Committee
   4. Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest

B. Other Service Providers (OSPs)
   5. Area Agency on Aging
   6. Habilitation and Independent Living Specialists, Inc.
   7. Arizona Refugee Community Center
   8. S.T. Gregg and Associates

C. Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
   9. The Association of Afghans in Arizona, Inc.
   10. Somali Association in Arizona, Inc.
   11. Vietnamese Volunteers of Arizona
   12. Kurdish Community in Arizona (phone interview)
   13. Refugee Women United for Progress

Refugee Focus Groups (Conducted six focus groups, totaling 42 refugees in Phoenix)

1. All male group of six refugees, including: Sudan -1 adult; Somalia - 1 adult; Bosnia - 2 adults; Afghanistan - 1 adult; Iraq - 1 adult.

2. Mixed group of six refugees, including: Liberia - 1 adult male; Sudan - 3 adult males; Afghanistan - 1 adult male; Afghanistan 1 adult female.

3. Mixed group of nine refugees from Laos, including: 2 young women, 1 older woman, 6 older men.

4. All women's group of four refugees, including: Somalia - 1 adult; Sudan - 2 adults; Ethiopia - 1 adult.

5. Mixed group of seven Kurdish refugees (originating from Turkey, Iran and Iraq), including: 3 adult men; 4 adult women.

6. Student/In-training group of ten refugees, including: Laos - 1 adult female; Somalia - 1 adult male; Iraq - 1 adult female; Croatia - 1 adult female; Ethiopia - 1 adult male; Bosnia - 2 adult males; Bosnia - 3 adult females.

III. FINDINGS

A. OVERVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

The research team asked every refugee-serving organization to answer general demographic questions about their refugee clientele, and to describe how "open cases" are counted within their system of management. Central to the definition of "open case" is an individual's continued refugee status, and whether the resettlement agency closes a case if the refugee client has been out of contact for a predetermined period of time. In a "closed" case, it is likely the individual has moved away or acquired US citizen status, although there is the option of reopening a case in the former. Resettlement agencies only close cases when it is unlikely the individual will ever re-contact the resettlement agency in the future. The research team therefore considers a tabulation of "open cases" as the most representative of potential demand for services within the refugee population of Tucson and Phoenix.

The responses to the survey make clear the high degree of variability across agencies in record keeping for refugee clients. This variability makes it difficult for the research team, or refugee providers and administrative agencies, to predict with accuracy the numbers of clients or potential clients who seek services. However, this data does permit rough estimations that may be useful to planners.

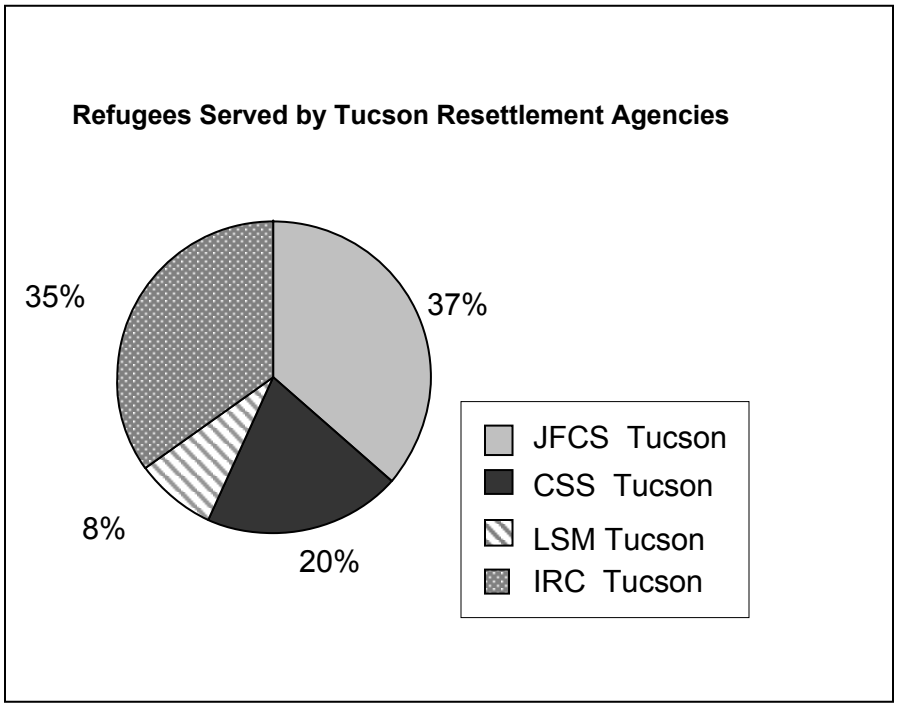
Table III - A provides responses from eight resettlement agencies (VOLAGs) in Phoenix and Tucson for the number of current "open cases" on file, and definition of "open case." Using these rough estimates, BARA estimates the total number of open cases of refugees in Tucson at 1,540 +/- 200. **Graph III-A** illustrates the distribution of open cases across resettlement agencies, and percentages are approximates. In Phoenix, the BARA team estimates the number of open cases to be 6,600 +/- 1,000, which are distributed across agencies according to the percentages depicted in **Graph III-B.**

These numbers provide, at a minimum, a reference base for the refugee population in Tucson and Phoenix. In the chapters that follow, BARA reports estimates by service providers of the proportion of refugees which might utilize specified services. These proportions may be informally related to the above calculations, as a rough approximation of potential demand. Given the varied and imprecise nature of organizational accounting for "open cases," the team prefers this use of percentage estimates and baseline ranges as opposed to exact numeric calculations.

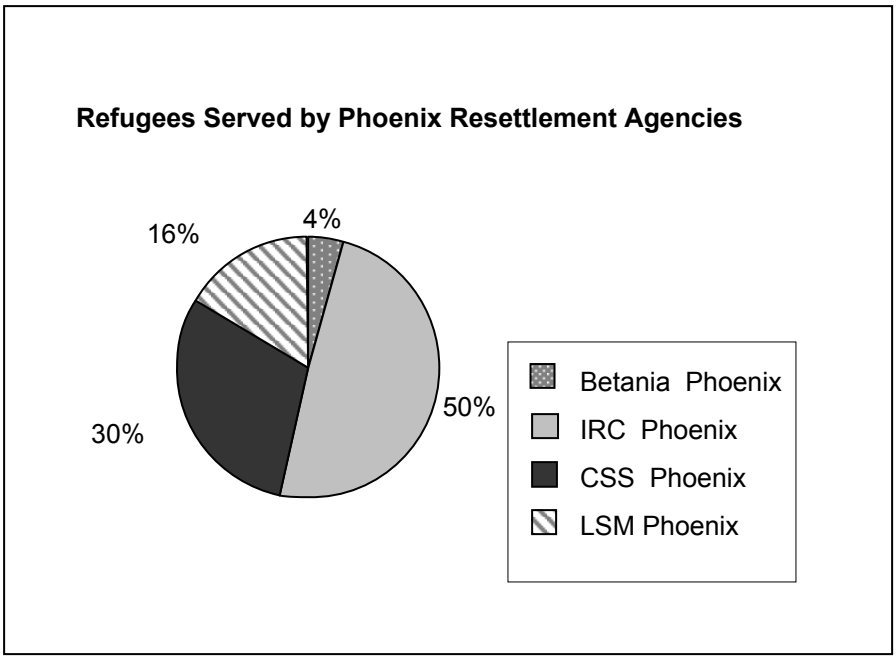
Table III - A: Number and definition of "open cases" among VOLAGs in Tucson and Phoenix

Organization interviewed	Definition of "open case"
698 individual refugees across 266 cases households have been served. At the beginning many moved out of Tucson, while maybe 70% stayed, leaving around 480 individuals still here and open cases, which is about 130 households.	Organization keeps track of both individual and household data, but does not use an active definition of "open" or "closed" case.
434 people - the "figure is somewhat deceptive as we are in the process of closing cases as they have been here a year or more and are not using our services and after we close these cases the real figure is closer to 100. If you include Family Passages cases it is closer to 600." The cases are in various stages of being open. The intensive help and support happens over the first 4 months after that they still have open status but not as active. If the case is closed the file is formally closed and the client has been informed, it can be opened again but it doesn't happen often.	Currently changing definition of "open case". Each case = one individual, although they track breakdown across households.
"We have over 100 open cases, but clients come at various times. The kinds of services we provide vary at different times in an individual's lifetime."	Organization tallies open cases for individuals.
"We calculate that on average we get 55 refugees per year. Last year was a terrible year, we were supposed to get 55, got 12. This year, just in the last two weeks of February and first of March, we suddenly got 27 or 30. We are supposed to receive 65 this year. We get a maximum of 15 others (coming from other states, not asylees). And, those from years before are still using our services. So, in the last 5 years, we've probably served 250-300. I'm counting about 50 per year or a little more. Households? We got the maximum in 2001—31 households. We average 20 households. We've served in the last five years probably 100 households [by deduction]. "	Counts the number of refugees that arrive each year, but does not assign open or closed status over time.
This program serves people 55 and older, providing core services for resettlement. Between 2001-2003, 136 people served.	Calculates number of individual refugees served, but does not assign open or closed status over time.
900-950 refugees (individuals) served. Rough estimate of 300 families.	Calculates number served, but does not assign open or closed status over time.
At least 1000 –2000 open cases. Over the past 7 years: 2287 cases, 5973 refugees [= 2.61 average household size over past 7 years. Their 1000 – 2000 open cases roughly equals 2610 to 5220 people]	A case equals one household. Organization tracks both total number individuals and households, and estimates current open cases.
"Normally 500 refugees/yr. Regularly see 150-200 families. But since 2001 it has dropped. 230 individuals in 2002. Active since early 1980s. We focus on new arrivals but see people for up to 5 yrs for employment upgrades, medical issues etc."	Organization keeps track of both individual and household data, but does not use an active definition of "open" or "closed" case.

Graph III – A



Graph III - B



B. CHILDCARE

1. Introduction

The Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) has identified childcare as a "refugee need requiring further understanding." As such, the BARA team was tasked with collecting data to identify the potential use by refugees of, and operational considerations for, a childcare center/subsidy program. This section explores current practices employed by refugees to meet their childcare needs; details constraints and opportunities identified by both refugees and refugee-serving organizations with respect to childcare services; and provides suggestions on behalf of individual refugees, as well as organizations, toward improving the accessibility and quality of childcare services among the refugee communities in Tucson and Phoenix.

The BARA study clearly found that *access to quality childcare service is of significant concern for the vast majority of refugees participating in this study*. Data collected from the eight refugee resettlement agencies (VOLAGs) interviewed, revealed that approximately 30-50 percent of all refugee families in Pima and Maricopa County currently have young children. Further, in response to BARA's questionnaire, every representative of the 20 organizations polled in the study, responded that all refugee families with children would be interested in *some form* of financial or other related assistance with childcare needs.

To ensure a balanced and comprehensive approach to data gathering and analysis, common themes and variations *between* responses provided by individual refugees, and those provided by representatives of organizations, were carefully noted. With respect to childcare, several important differences in perception between the two units of analysis were identified, and are highlighted in this section. As requested by RRP, the BARA team also monitored variations in service needs and related perceptions between the *geographical locations* of Tucson and Phoenix.

2. Current Practices

A primary finding pertaining to current childcare practices among refugees in both Tucson and Phoenix, according to both refugees and organizations interviewed, is that a *majority of refugees are currently utilizing informal, unpaid childcare mechanisms.* Most refugee parents take care of their own children, so that while one spouse/partner is working, the other parent cares for the children. Among those parents who both work, alternating work schedules/shifts are typical among refugees, allowing for one parent to be at home with the children. In cases where one spouse/partner is working full time, the other parent typically takes on the primary caretaking responsibilities. In these cases, it is most frequently the mother who stays with the children while the father works, although there were exceptions among those interviewed.

When childcare outside of the parental unit is necessary or desired, a majority of refugees interviewed responded that relatives (those within their extended family unit such as grandparents and in-laws) typically provide childcare. In families with more than one child, the older siblings may be given the responsibility to care for their younger brothers and sisters. Respondents frequently emphasized that those refugee families with larger numbers of older children or larger extended families have greater childcare support than those without extended families. For instance, those within the Vietnamese community, often with large families, expressed being especially fortunate with respect to benefiting from extended family childcare support systems.

While refugees prioritize childcare within their direct or extended family units, refugee women reported at times relying on the support of friends or neighbors to help care for their children. Social networks within ethnic community groups appear to be especially useful in this regard. However, these arrangements with friends appear to be utilized less frequently, and are less consistent than arrangements

directly within the family. Refugees in focus groups explained a scenario whereby several women work out their schedules so that they work part-time on different shifts, and allowing exchanges and a rotation of childcare responsibilities. While greatly appreciated by these refugee parents, it was reported that this is primarily a situation which is applied on an ad-hoc basis. It does not appear to be a childcare arrangement that allows for sustained, long-term work.

Focus group participants indicated that a proportion of refugee families are using commercial childcare services, though this practice is significantly less common than informal arrangements. One refugee-serving organization estimated that less than ten percent of the refugees they serve with children use commercial childcare services. However, another resettlement agency explained that given a large proportion of the agency's clients are single-parent refugees (such as the single Afghani mothers), they are more likely to qualify for DES financial childcare assistance and are using commercial childcare services.

None of the refugee-serving organizations provide formal childcare services for their clients (for various reasons described below). Several among the VOLAGs, CBOs and OSPs do, however, provide informal childcare arrangements to assist in watching the refugee parent's children during specific training sessions, services or classes. The level of appreciation among the refugee parents for this type of support service was very high among those interviewed in this study. It is clear that when these informal on-site childcare services are provided, they are utilized to their fullest capacity.

A unique program called the Refugee Targeted Assistance (RTAP) Program, operating in Maricopa County, provides integrated training, childcare and transportation services for refugees. The training is located at the Maricopa Skills Center in Phoenix. Refugee trainees are assisted in choosing childcare services most appropriate to their needs, which is then financed by the Program. Transportation to and from childcare and the training center is organized as part of the Program, either through a dedicated van service or by offering bus tickets, or gas allowances for those with their own vehicle. Both these services enable parents to attend training while their children are cared for by childcare service providers. Refugees participating in this program claimed they simply *could not attend any type of training without this childcare support service.* While there are some refugee's families which utilize the DES-subsidized childcare, most are not eligible for financial support through the DES system (see more below).

Given that childcare is a serious concern for the majority of refugee families, parents have developed many creative ways to address this issue. The BARA team had the opportunity to learn about the existence of "childcare cooperatives," which exists in some refugee communities. The difficulty of this arrangement, however, is that refugees explained how it requires an extremely high level of cooperation and organization. Some refugee women shared that they bring their children with them to ESL classes, professional training, and sometimes even to work. Several women explained that they sought, and held, jobs in childcare to allow for both earning an income and having their children cared for at the same time.

Women are the primary caretakers, usually responsible not only for the children but for related household work, and some refugees indicated that these duties, often coupled with lack of English skills, have led to feelings of exhaustion. As a result of having little mobility (from lack of transportation or from being home all day with children, and thus, unable to participate in ESL, trainings, work, or social activities relative to their husbands/partners), the team was told that some refugee women have experienced feelings of isolation. Often refugee women would mention their friend, or a refugee woman they know, that feels unable to engage in social activities and take advantage of opportunities due the problem of mobility and lack of childcare support to allow for quiet time to learn skills and practice English.

Throughout the discussions of the various forms of childcare that refugees utilize, the importance of improvements related to refugee childcare needs was clearly an area of primary concern for both the refugees and the organizations in Tucson and Phoenix.

3. Issues

While childcare is considered a major need for refugees with young children, very few refugees are accessing commercial childcare facilities or programs. There are a variety of constraints preventing refugees from utilizing these services. Both refugees and the organizations that serve them listed cultural, financial, institutional, and logistical issues contributing to refugees' lack of access to, or use of, formal childcare structures. Each of these categories of constraints is discussed in this section, as well as how an understanding of these issues differs between refugees and the various refugee-serving organizations.

Cultural constraints

The most frequently cited reasons for refugees choosing not to use formal childcare services can be loosely categorized as "cultural" constraints. Nearly three-fourths of the refugee focus groups and over half of the refugee-serving organizations identified cultural constraints as barriers to refugee's using formal childcare. It is significant to note that though both refugees and organizations identified these issues, in some cases they perceive the nature of these constraints differently.

Refugee-serving organizations identified the problem of a *lack of understanding among refugees of the idea or concept of a formal childcare system.* The idea of leaving children with someone they do not know is a foreign concept to many refugees being served, and this inhibits them from using a childcare center. For instance, one staff member of an organization stated, "In most countries, childcare does not exist." Another agency representative perceived this reluctance as being culture-specific, sharing a perspective that refugees with a European background are more likely to use formal childcare than other refugee groups.

The concerns expressed by individual refugees interviewed as part of the refugee focus groups, predominantly focused on issues related to *quality of existing childcare and the level of cultural sensitivity* within these organizations. Several women spoke of picking up their children to find them dirty, hungry, or suffering from rashes. In discussions with refugee parents, it was revealed that many do not trust their children's well-being at existing childcare centers. Concerns expressed included issues such as basic safety precautions, attention to their children's hygiene, concerns with the potential discrimination of their children, the possible erosion of cultural values, and a general lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of childcare providers.

From discussions with refugee parents in the focus groups, it appears there exist very real and visible cultural differences among refugee parents and U.S. childcare providers in several areas. These include issues such as health care practices, nutritional knowledge, feeding practices, nurturing norms, and differing approaches to taking care of a "sick" child. Some of these differences, as expressed by the refugee parents interviewed, create a sense of fear or distrust on the part of refugees toward childcare providers and associated services.

For instance, a refugee woman shared that within her cultural practices, pork is not allowed in her family's diet. Although she clearly informed the daycare with respect to her child's food restriction, her request was not being implemented and her child was being given pork. The refugee mother then sent yogurt for her child to eat instead of pork, but the teacher refused, with the explanation given there was not enough yogurt for other children and thus it was deemed not appropriate for one child to be given special food. Examples such as this, which point to a possible lack of cultural understanding on the part of the childcare centers present serious concerns for refugees needing childcare support. The example also serves to highlight the need for both childcare centers, and refugee parents, to improve communication and information exchange -- so that childcare systems and individual needs can be better addressed.

The BARA team also identified language as being an obstacle to accessing and utilizing formal childcare services. Over one-third of refugee-serving organizations interviewed identified language as being a significant constraint, making it difficult for refugee parents to communicate with the childcare providers, and vice versa, exacerbating issues of cultural distance, distrust and misunderstanding. As expressed by a Sudanese mother, "A lot of refugee women don't work, because they are scared of day care. Also, some of this fear is because they don't speak same language as those at the daycare, so they can't communicate about anything." Further, refugee parents are concerned that their children may be isolated in a childcare situation where others do not speak the child's language. However, when discussing the language barrier, both parents and representatives of organizations often see a vital need for these children to learn English.

Financial constraints

The cost of childcare is another major constraint to accessing formalized services, identified by half of the refugee focus groups and approximately one-third of the organizations interviewed. Based on responses from refugees and refugee-serving organizations interviewed, it is estimated that the cost of commercial childcare is at least $500 per month per child in both Phoenix and Tucson. This is an exorbitant cost when considered in the context of the limited income of most refugee households. This difference in cost between geographic locations was negligible within the responses provided by individual refugees, as well as refugee-serving organizations. As mentioned above, most refugees attempt to make arrangements within their families or communities due to the (often unmanageable) expense of formal childcare, or one spouse does not work and cares for the children. A parent explained to the BARA team, "My wife doesn't work, and she stays with the kids. If she goes to work and makes some money, she is going to spend most of the money on childcare."

The cost of childcare is part of the cyclical problems experienced by refugees and discussed throughout this report. Without affordable and accessible childcare, it is difficult for refugee populations to be in a position to obtain training, pursue their education, secure and sustain well-paying jobs (and sometime even low skilled jobs). Once employment is obtained, a majority of refugees' families are unable to afford the necessary expense of childcare. For those parents caring for their own children while the spouse/partner is working, the need for flexible job scheduling (in order to earn adequate family income) is critical. The expense of formal childcare is clearly an issue that impacts refugee parents' ability to obtain training, take advantage of educational opportunities, improve their skills and English language abilities, and earn sufficient income.

Institutional Constraints

In addition to the cultural and financial issues, there exist institutional constraints within current assistance programs. Refugee-serving organizations cited these existing obstacles with the current system of childcare assistance in about one-fourth of BARA's interviews, and some refugees mentioned them in focus group discussions.

Provisions are currently in place to help underprivileged families with childcare, *but the existing social safety net is simply inadequate for the majority of refugee families.* The current DES childcare subsidies are provided on a sliding scale basis, for which eligibility criteria does not "catch" the majority of refugee families in serious need of assistance. If families earn an extremely low level of income, they can be eligible for subsidies. However, once additional income is earned (usually an amount which is still not enough to pay for childcare), they become ineligible for childcare subsidies.

Another problem with the current DES childcare subsidy program, according to those interviewed, is that the most convenient daycare center for any given refugee family may not accept DES vouchers. As a

result, these refugees may need to travel longer distances to take advantage of the program. This can be an extremely difficult task for those parents with children utilizing public transportation (see Transportation). Further, the DES system can be somewhat complicated to understand for refugees without a solid grasp of English.

A further constraint faced by refugees in using formal childcare services is simply lack of access to information about their childcare options. Several refugees expressed being unfamiliar with the various childcare facilities or programs potentially available to them. The BARA team found that current knowledge with respect to childcare services among refugees is obtained primarily by word of mouth from resettlement agencies, relatives, and friends.

Logistical Constraints

The final major category of constraints mentioned by refugees and organizations are logistical constraints, both temporal and spatial problems with accessing childcare services and facilities. After concerns with trust and quality of care, the constraint most frequently mentioned by refugees concerned the hours of operation for childcare centers. Because refugees are often working jobs with irregular shifts, such as late at night or early in the morning, the normal hours of childcare service are not adequate. Parents often cannot pick up their children before the childcare center closes, or the center is not open when the parents must go to work. The current hours of operation of most formalized childcare is not compatible with the extreme variability in work schedules of many refugee parents.

Another major problem with accessing childcare is the issue of transportation. This was perceived to be especially critical by organizations, though it was identified as a concern in several refugee focus groups, as well. Discussed in more detail below, lack of transportation can present unique challenges to parents attempting to get their children to daycare centers. Public transportation was cited as being unreliable and inconvenient by refugee parents, especially when traveling with small children. The extreme heat in Tucson and Phoenix makes it a hazard to take children via public transportation to daycare everyday, and the time waiting for a bus, bus transfers, walking distances (with babies, young, children, strollers, diaper bags, bottles, medicines, etc.) is very hard. Most refugees cannot afford private means of transport, and if they own a car, it is typically only one vehicle -- with one spouse/partner left to use the bus. Therefore, the distance of the childcare center from the refugees' homes or places of employment can be a significant obstacle to utilization of the facility. The issue of transportation and childcare varied between Tucson and Phoenix, given that while it is a difficult circumstance for all refugees, the distances traveled by those in Phoenix may be greater.

Finding appropriate, affordable, and quality childcare is a struggle for U.S. citizens and refugees alike, however, the additional complications of language barriers, socio-cultural adjustments makes it an especially challenging situation for refugees in Arizona.

4. Suggestions for improvements

There is clearly a need for improved childcare provision within refugee communities. Access to childcare is a prerequisite for many refugees to be in a position to pursue training and sustain employment. In order to better meet the needs of the refugee communities in Tucson and Phoenix, this section explores several options for improved childcare services suggested in refugee focus groups, as well as by refugee-serving organizations. The BARA team inquired specifically about the options suggested by RRP within the ISA, such as a childcare center/subsidies program, but also elicited innovative additional suggestions from individual refugees, and refugee-serving organizations. Several such ideas are outlined below.

Childcare centers

a) Refugee childcare center (multi-ethnic)
Approximately three-fourths of the refugee focus groups and nearly half of the refugee-serving organizations approved of the proposal of a refugee childcare center. Refugee focus groups and organizations suggested that this be a multi-ethnic center serving the entire refugee community. The most important feature of a childcare center would be that it be staffed by refugees with various language capabilities.

b) Childcare centers serving individual refugee communities
Several refugee focus groups and organizations preferred the idea of multiple small childcare centers serving individual refugee communities and staffed by members of those refugee communities. These smaller centers could address the specific needs of their particular clientele in a common language, and with a common understanding of cultural norms and values.

Whether serving multiple or single refugee communities, refugee-run or staffed childcare centers were considered in a positive light for several reasons. Refugee staff members may be more sensitive to cultural differences, and thus able to understand the unique needs of refugee children and their families. This could help toward building a sense of trust and potentially mitigate some of the parental concerns. Those who preferred the idea of a childcare center run by and for one ethnic group, felt that when staff members are of the same ethnic community as their clients, there is more likely to be sense a familiarity and trust between parents and childcare providers. Further, children, parents, and childcare providers would all be able to communicate more effectively. In both cases, refugee-run or staffed childcare centers would have the added benefit of providing needed jobs for refugees, especially women.

Whereas some refugees participating in the focus groups appeared to prefer having an entirely separate childcare center for refugees or one specific refugee community, other comments by focus group participants indicated that the most important feature was to have some refugees on the staff of existing childcare centers to provide language skills and cultural sensitivity. In one focus group, for example, three Bosnian women were critical of the quality of care at a certain center, but wanted to stay there because there was a Bosnian woman on the staff with whom they and their children felt comfortable and could easily communicate.

Though the idea of both these types of refugee-run childcare center for refugees was popular, both refugees and organizations express major caveats about this arrangement. One concern is that such a 'refugee' environment would hamper the child's acculturation into American society, primarily the child's education in English. This concern reflects larger debates about the refugee experience in America and continuing "enclave" versus "integration" discussions and negotiations. Refugees balance the desire for support from their cultural community with the desire to become an integrated member of American society, and this tension is reflected in deliberations about childcare options. One organization specifically opposed a refugee-only childcare center because it was felt that it would deny refugee children the experience of interacting with children from diverse backgrounds. Further, one VOLAG representative felt that creating additional childcare centers was duplicative of existing structures, and that an alternative would be to encourage mainstream childcare centers to be more refugee-sensitive, possibly having VOLAG case workers serve as a liaison with childcare centers on issues of language, cultural norms, and other refugee-specific concerns. Finally, two Phoenix organizations suggested that an a possible compromise would be that a child's attendance at a refugee childcare center should be time-limited, with the goal of integrating the children into Head Start or other mainstream programs at a later date.

With some exceptions discussed below, *nearly all options suggested by refugees revolved around the idea of refugee-staffed childcare centers.* However, some organizations had additional proposals for improving existing childcare centers. Location is one of the criteria identified as important by both groups, with the most common preference being that childcare centers are located close to where refugees live, or near places of work. This may be difficult when refugee communities are spread across Tucson or Phoenix, but some organizations suggested locating centers within apartment complexes where many refugees are resettled in clusters. Note that the legalities of licensing of such a facility would be a primary factor in the plausibility of this suggestion.

Another option suggested by refugees and organizations was the possibility of locating a childcare center within or near the resettlement agencies or the other MAAs. These are places that refugees are familiar with, and already visit on a regular basis. Further, given that those informal childcare arrangements at these organizations is fully utilized when available, it is likely that this location would be appreciated by refugee parents. Some of the agencies and MAAs have attempted to formalize childcare services in the past, but were limited by funds as well as issues of liability and/or space. The BARA team did not specifically ask each refugee-serving organization about their interest in actually having a formal, on-site childcare center, and thus, findings within this study cannot speak to whether or not individual agencies want childcare centers operating under their management.

Directly linked to the issue of location of childcare facilities are issues of transportation. Within several of the refugee focus group discussions it was suggested that there might be a van to pick up refugees and their children and take them to the childcare center. Those participating in the RTAP training program where childcare and transportation were provided felt that this "combined" system was extremely helpful. If childcare centers were located closer to home or work, or if they were to be located within neighborhood apartment complexes, transportation of children to and from the center would be less problematic.

The issue of language could be addressed by having refugee-focused childcare centers, but most agreed that there should be some effort toward multi-lingual service in even mainstream childcare centers. Refugee parents want their children to learn English, but they also want to be able to communicate with childcare providers and have their children be comfortable speaking their native language, as well.

A final area that requires attention both for existing and possible future childcare facilities, is the schedule of operation of the center. In order to be useful to refugee parents, childcare centers must have flexible hours to accommodate the extremely variable schedules of refugee parents. The normal hours kept by childcare facilities are not adequate for many refugee families and the need for flexibility and variability in scheduling very important. Refugees often need to use childcare on a 'drop-in' basis, especially when seeking work or attending appointments in the early stages of resettlement.

<u>Subsidies</u>

Another proposal considered by the refugee focus groups and organizations was the provision of subsidies to help finance childcare. All the participants agreed that some form of financial assistance would be extremely valuable to refugee families, and subsidies could fulfill this role. *The main benefit identified with a subsidy program was that there was potential for such assistance to be more flexible and allow refugees to pursue their preferred childcare option.* Refugees and organizations, however, did voice concerns about programs that require complicated procedures to access.

There were conflicting opinions on how a subsidy program should be structured, and concern among organizations about increasing the administrative tasks (possible red tape) of already overburdened staff. Some respondents suggested subsidies should cover full childcare costs for refugee children, and others

thought they should be partially subsidized. Further, one organization pointed out that a subsidy program would not resolve many of the constraints already facing refugees in terms of trust or concerns with transportation and scheduling. Childcare support for refugees needs to be holistic in nature to be most effective, to include financial support, flexibility, transportation support, and cultural and language considerations.

Other suggestions

a) Increased provision for RTAP or similar Program
The integrated training/childcare/transportation nature of the RTAP program is much appreciated by those refugees participating in it. This type of program should be expanded, but also be available to single parents. Childcare provision needs to be provided for a period after training is completed, to give graduates of the program the opportunity to find a job. The financial assistance for the childcare component needs to be sufficient to cover good quality care.

b) Childcare provision within refugee-serving organizations
Both refugee focus groups and organizations suggested that greater provision is needed for temporary childcare facilities within organizations, while training, workshops and other events are being held. As these currently rely on volunteers, they are often under-resourced and over-subscribed.

c) Assistance to formalize some informal childcare arrangements
While most discussion revolved around childcare subsidies or a childcare center, another suggestion made by several organizations was to formalize the informal networks of childcare that refugees are currently utilizing. That is, provide women currently caring for refugees' children with training and help with the certification process so they can run in-home childcare facilities that qualify under DES assistance guidelines. Since the majority of refugees are accessing these home-based mechanisms more regularly than mainstream services, formalizing them may be a way to assist refugees with childcare needs while addressing issues of trust and cultural familiarity. Several organizational representatives, and refugee focus group participants, articulated strong interest in this approach. A few reservations among several Somalian mothers included concerns about liability, and feeling that private home care may be dangerous because there is no one to monitor any possible abuses/neglect of the child.

d) Childcare assistance in the early stages of refugee resettlement
As discussed under the childcare section above, three organizations in Phoenix suggested that childcare assistance should be limited to the early stages of a refugee's resettlement. Full assistance with childcare could help during the job-seeking and initial employment period, as well as helping families to access English language and other training, or finding work for the second wage earner.

e) Education/training
Finally, education appears to be a necessary component of any childcare program. Not only do refugees need to be educated about their childcare options, the benefits that it can offer, and how formal childcare works in the United States, but childcare providers also need to be educated about the unique needs and circumstances of refugee children and parents. Many frustrations experienced by refugees regarding childcare are issues of misunderstanding or miscommunication, and increased knowledge on the part of both refugees and childcare providers could potentially help this process.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Childcare is a priority for many refugee families, and current childcare provisions are inadequate to meet the needs of the vast majority of them. Because of this, most families rely on informal childcare arrangements with family and friends. However, these arrangements can come at an excessive social cost

for refugee families and communities. Often this burden is disproportionately placed on women, who remain isolated while dealing with childcare responsibilities. Refugees and refugee-serving organizations identify a need for improvement in existing formal childcare options available for refugees.

Refugees have diverse and valid differences in opinion on parenting and childcare. There are several key issues that are critical to any future childcare provisions and shared by most refugees and organizations interviewed as part of this study, including flexibility, cultural sensitivity, and financial assistance.

Flexibility needs to be a fundamental constituent of any childcare program, both in terms of choices for care and accessibility of services. Given the relative instability of the refugee experience and the variability in which types of childcare are preferred under which circumstances, *refugees must be able to choose which childcare options work best for them at any given time. Offering a choice of childcare alternatives will be more useful than any rigid, pre-determined program.* Childcare options need to be flexible in terms of availability, as well as structure. Refugee parents working unusual hours and irregular schedules need childcare services at non-peak times.

Cultural differences are also clearly major constraints identified by both refugees and organizations. Effective childcare provision must include cultural sensitivity for the unique needs of refugee children, be they dietary, linguistic, or behavioral. Education on the part of both refugees and organizations will be key in diminishing cultural misunderstandings. Refugees will hesitate to utilize formal childcare if issues of trust are of concern, even if financial support is provided. Refugee parents are concerned with the safety and well-being of their children, and quality of care is essential.

Finally, there is a need for financial assistance with childcare costs in some form, whether as subsidies, an inexpensive childcare center, or other options. The majority of refugee families simply cannot afford childcare on what are typically minimum-wage incomes, even with both parents working. Access to childcare is a crucial element of a refugee family's endeavor to become self-sufficient. Without a trusted, affordable, and accessible option for caring for their children, refugees are not able to pursue ESL or professional training or sustain regular employment.

C. TRAINING

1. Introduction

Inquiries about training needs revealed a great deal about refugee adjustment in Arizona. BARA researchers asked questions about training in life skills, English language, job training, and re-credentialing. In their feedback, respondents focused primarily on their employment experience and English language competency.

Many refugees arrive in the U.S. full of dreams and hope for a bright future. However, competing demands on their time -- between their work, life-skills training, caring for their families, and learning English -- can create formidable barriers for job and career related advancement. *Lack of English competency limits progress in employment and the ability to utilize training programs*. One VOLAG representative stated, "There are so many losses for them to bear." Another reported that depression can set in after three years when refugees realize they may not be able to use their existing skills and training (obtained in their home countries). At this stage, they realize that their ability to re-train and advance is limited by the enormous demands on their time. The respondent expressed, "We have the greatest chance to make the most impact upon the youngest people…but I don't like sacrificing anyone." Another VOLAG stated, "We're so darn successful in getting refugees employed, that a few months later, they drop out of training."

Within this section, existing training options and constraints to obtaining training are reviewed. This is followed by a discussion of options that refugees and refugee-serving organizations shared with respect to improving training programs and access. Finally, a summary of findings concerning questions about training as posed at the outset of the study is provided, along with recommendations from the BARA research team.

2. Life skills training

Refugee resettlement organizations provide a variety of initial assistance with life skills, and remain available to refugees at different points of their adjustment to life in Arizona. Various organizations reported their provision of a variety of workshops on non-vocational subjects, such as women's health, money management, immigration issues, women's empowerment and leadership skills, drivers training, and domestic violence counseling and support services. The VOLAGs focus primarily on case management assistance with housing, finding jobs, and an initial orientation to such things as shopping, transportation, and services.

Some within refugee focus groups in Phoenix expressed receiving poor initial orientation assistance, e.g, in how to get around, calling 9-11 for emergencies, and how other systems work in Arizona. They attributed this problem to the delegation of so much of the responsibility for their orientation to well-meaning, but non-professional volunteers. A refugee in Tucson reported that she had arrived at the same time as quite a number of other refugees, and was afraid to impose on the time of her caseworker, who appeared quite overwhelmed with caring for so many refugees at once. A Phoenix-based refugee noted that he was very excited to come to the United States, but lamented that his experience in a Guam holding center was actually much better as the military ran the center, and it was much more efficient. This refugee group suggested that they would prefer for the government to run programs that had one-stop shopping for their training and adjustment needs. Finally, two Tucson organizations noted that orientations are currently "one-time," but should be ongoing and extended to at least six months.

3. Employment and job training

Below, existing programs and practices are detailed along with five critical constraints to appropriate and useful employment and/or accessing job training.

English skills

The most-cited constraint to effective refugee adjustment in Arizona is competency in English ("effective" meaning, refugees establishing a life circumstance in the United States that they reasonably envision for themselves). The ability to speak and understand English is critical to all aspects of their adjustment, from knowing what buses to take and what opportunities are available to them, to securing jobs that pay enough to support themselves and their families. Refugees want to make a contribution to U.S. society and support themselves and their families, and they want to function in jobs at a level commensurate with their skills and abilities. Refugees reported that it is hard to get a good job that takes advantage of existing skills if "… you don't know how the systems here work, and you can't learn the systems unless you know English." One organization noted that poor English increases discrimination in the workplace: "…regardless of skill, if refugees don't have good English, their skill base is worthless." Lack of English competency was also cited as a significant constraint to accessing higher education opportunities.

Interviewees from organizations and refugee focus groups consistently reported three barriers to achieving English competency:

a) The English language training that is made available to them, while flexible in that it is offered at a variety of times and locations, was reported as inadequate to develop basic communicative competency. It is not intense enough, "serious" enough, or concentrated enough in the beginning. The classes are not immersion classes. Refugees stated that the classes offered are frequently pitched at too low a level, starting at the extreme beginning with basic phrases like greetings, when some already know this very basic level and want to progress more quickly. One refugee that had just arrived the previous week, told us through an interpreter that she would like to have a tutor come to her house to help with both life skills and English. Others expressed the desire to have books or at-home practice tapes/CDs made available to help them. These comments speak to their frustration at not being able to progress fast enough in English.

This issue was mentioned both by refugees in focus groups and almost all of the organizations interviewed. It is directly related to the training question, because lack of English competency is a constraint to getting useful, beneficial training. Lack of English competency upon finishing training is a barrier to getting and keeping jobs, and, according to several respondents, is resulting in lowered reputation of the Maricopa Skills Center Program among Phoenix employers. In Tucson, one VOLAG reported that some of the young Sudanese men are taking GEDs but not passing due to a lack of English competency. Some refugees said that their greatest constraint to getting jobs is because of lack of confidence in their English.

Daily immersion classes of at least four hours duration at the very beginning of a refugee's arrival in the U.S., and lasting for a period of 2-4 months, would be useful. More university and community college ESL training should be made available to refugees since this training can be of the intensity that was being requested. Cost and time also appear to be the major barriers to learning English. Many respondents thought that a longer period of English before being asked to look for work would be an important corrective measure that would positively impact the refugee resettlement experience. One refugee noted, though, that this would help only if the ESL training is very intensive.

b) The need for training in "job-specific" English was reported in refugee focus groups, and was often mentioned in conjunction with the issue of re-credentialing. Those coming with professional degrees in engineering or the medical profession, for example, may not be eligible to work within these professions if they have not mastered English that is specific to their professions. Some told us that they needed access to university-based English classes in order to improve their written English competency. They needed assistance with items such as composing resumes and technical writing. One woman told us that she had been able to secure a job in her field at a local hospital as a surgical assistant, making $15 per hour. She had worked in this field for several years in Iran, knew all the surgical instruments, but was eventually let go because she could not verbally respond quickly enough to the surgeon's demands due to her lack of English competency. She now works as a CMA in the health care field, making $6 per hour. This regression in job level might have been avoided with even a month's specialized medical English training.

c) A third barrier noted by VOLAG interviewees concerns those who arrive without having achieved literacy in their native languages. One respondent stated that if they cannot read and write in their native language, it is unlikely that ESL training will be able to get them past the fifth grade level in English competency.

Balancing work, training, and childcare needs

Federal policy mandates that refugee resettlement agencies must focus on getting refugees into jobs as quickly as possible, and in most cases within a month of arrival. This requirement puts a great deal of pressure on refugees to take entry-level jobs that do not require English competency and most often do not take full advantage of their existing skills. Once they are in these low-paying, entry-level jobs, the amount of time they must spend working to support themselves and their families acts as an additional barrier to pursuit of training (reported by four Tucson organizations). And, some with poor language skills are employed at hotels with other non-English-speaking refugees, and their employment situation does not help them to advance in their English competency. By contrast, one Phoenix-based refugee told of quitting his first job placement and going to work in a gas station where he could interact with the local residents, and his English rapidly improved, as did his knowledge of the community.

On-the-job training was identified as an ideal situation by both the organizations and refugees themselves. In fact, all of the organizations in Tucson, and over two-thirds of the organizations interviewed in Phoenix, and over half of refugee focus groups expressed a high level of appreciation for on-the-job opportunities. The health care field has on-the-job training infrastructure in place, especially for CMA and radiology training, and respondents appeared satisfied with these programs. However, VOLAG interviewees reported that their attempts to facilitate on-the-job training situations in other fields have not been particularly successful. On a positive note, two interviewees cited an example of a childcare center Director in Tucson who became responsive to this option as she has gained sensitivity to refugee issues.

Participating in training programs after work --whether ESL or job-training-- creates a situation where refugees are tired and thus at lowered capacity to learn. It puts additional pressure on refugees who also have to arrange and pay for extra childcare during that time. One MAA respondent said: "If they want to go to college or get credits, the problem is not just the tuition; it is that you have to work and take care of the kids and the family… They need more time so that they can work and train, or work less and train, but they also need help with tuition, or any financial help, so that they can afford it and still take care of their families."

Training programs that offer on-site childcare were cited by refugees and organizations as being ideal. The issue is particularly critical for women who are most often the primary caretakers, responsible both for the children and the related household work. As mentioned above (Childcare chapter), refugee

women reported that the women often stay at home with children and lack transportation. Their lack of mobility prevents them from engaging in training and can lead to feelings of isolation. The Refugee Targeted Assistance Program (RTAP) at the Maricopa Skills Center, discussed below, is particularly well suited to women; it is the only program which combines training, childcare, and transportation. Refugees who are relying on buses for transportation cannot attend training at night without assistance being provided.

Several interviewees from both refugee focus groups and from organizations discussed the serious issue of balancing work, training, and childcare needs -- an issue that every American faces. It is not surprising that refugees are also experiencing such difficulties. The fact that refugees must combine English training and job training with working--usually at minimum wage jobs--makes their situation particularly difficult. Simply struggling to speak in English and cope with an unfamiliar culture adds to the level of fatigue borne by refugees on a daily basis. The respective circumstances of U.S. citizens and refugees are different, sometimes requiring different approaches that accommodate the additional demands placed on refugees because of their English-language and cultural differences.

Re-credentialing

Refugees arrive wanting to contribute their skills and training to their new communities. They may arrive, however, without certificates attesting to their level of school completion and/or vocational training. Refugees expressed a desire to receive additional assistance with re-credentialing. Currently, re-credentialing is an extremely difficult process (with estimates given of between $150-600 to obtain a certificate that is translated and evaluated.) Without this process, refugees cannot use their existing credentials. Political circumstances may prevent people from even being able to access their previous credentialing paperwork. Some VOLAG interviewees noted that most do not transfer their certificates and degrees because the process is too long and costly. It can take years, and some refugees give up because the process takes so long. Once employed, it is hard for refugees to have the time to pursue the long, complicated process of trying to get back into their previous profession. An MAA representative stated, "People are professionals, but when they come here, they become 2nd and 3rd class citizens…they have to climb the mountain again."

Several refugees suggested that they needed assistance making the transition into work systems here, even if re-credentialing is not required. They may need assistance with upgrading their existing skills to fit U.S. standards. Some noted that they would be willing to take any level of job in their field so that re-credentialing might be facilitated and they can, in the meantime, exercise their existing skills to make a useful contribution to the community. For example, several stories of medical professionals, such as doctors, who worked as nurse's aides until someone realized their level of knowledge and began to help them advance. Finally, it bears repeating that, not being able to work in one's field is often due to lack of English skills.

> "I am a civil engineer. I have 17 years experience in construction. I worked on highways and big jobs. I worked in Lebanon for 12 years on very big projects. I came here and the only type of job that was available is cleaning in the hotel. No problem. I want to work. There is no possibility of promotion. When I go to the construction company, they say, "what is your experience?" and I say, "cleaning in a hotel." The problem is not the work but the type of work. I know many refugees that have degrees and they are two years cleaning in a hotel. The pay is terrible--$5 per hour. How can I go looking for a job and watch my child?" *Refugee focus group participant*

Limitations in training options, knowledge of them, and availability of funding

With respect to training options, knowledge about them, and financial support to take advantage of services, the differences between Phoenix and Tucson were significant. In Phoenix, the Maricopa Skills Center has a contract to provide training for refugees through the Refugee Targeted Assistance Program (RTAP) for Maricopa County. This program was originally intended to foster the employment of second or third wage earners within refugee families. In the Phoenix area, VOLAG representatives interviewed by the BARA team were highly supportive of the program's initial goal, but expressed concern that this purpose may since have been lost.

The RTAP Program offers vocational training programs, concurrently with ESL training. Refugees may be in the Program for seven months at no cost. VOLAG interviewees were critical of the program's results, saying that at the end of the training, local employers did not recognize the certificate issued by the Center.

Some refugees currently enrolled in the Program who were interviewed at the Center, as well as refugees in another Phoenix-area focus group, indicated that they thought the Program was helpful, provided good English training, and they generally viewed it positively. The latter respondents reported that they could not accomplish as much as they wanted to in skill acquisition because of having to take ESL and trade training concurrently, in too short a period. They suggested that at least nine months would be needed, and twelve months of training would actually be preferable if English was to be a significant part of the Program. They reported that the level of English competency achievable through the existing Program was not sufficient to allow local employers to hire them with confidence, and that therefore the reputation of the Center was going down.

> "One person, he came to us, and we signed him up. And because of the hours conflict he asked for a schedule change [at work], and he got that, and then they promised him a better job. They asked him, at work, to get the certificate, to improve his job. But we have a problem because we had to cut down the hours [of the training--it's only 7 months now instead of 9 months] and then at the end of his certificate it said 'helper'" and it does not look good. And you can't get the job."
> *An RTAP focus group interviewee*

Finally, an interviewee from a Phoenix MAA noted that refugees who tend to do well in the RTAP Program have support from husbands or fathers, but after a few years they earn more money and this can cause intra-family problems. The same interviewee also thought that the quality of English training in the Program was not very high.

Access to other training programs is limited by cost. Refugees in one Phoenix focus group reported undertaking training at community colleges with a level of subsidy insufficient to complete the program; they were not told in advance that they would need to pay a substantial amount themselves. As a result, they could not complete the training and received no certificate. A representative from one organization noted that people are unable to get training because they cannot afford it, and subsidies would be very welcome.

In Tucson, there are limited options for vocational training in general (according to one VOLAG interviewee), and refugee access at Pima Community College and proprietary schools is limited by cost. One Tucson VOLAG interviewee said, "proprietary schools charge an outrageous tuition for nursing or auto mechanics, put the tuition on a federal loan [e.g. a Pell Grant], but don't guarantee job placement afterwards," adding, "before you get to the issue of [job] training, you have to get ESL training."

Two OSPs interviewed offer computer skill training free of charge. One interviewee suggested that they need to be more extensive, and they need to be tied to some kind of credentialing. This respondent

thought that most refugees take advantage of these trainings, though this was not independently verified during interviews that were part of this research.

Interviewees in both Tucson and Phoenix suggested that training should be geared toward fields in which there is a demand for employees. However, one cautionary note was provided by an organization in response to our question of *what type of training* would be the most useful. That respondent noted, "It depends on the time. A few years ago, aviation and website development would have been useful. But those jobs have now dried up."

> "Under the Great Society [during the Johnson presidency], there were a number of federal programs for training. Our public policy makers have decided it is not a high priority. Years ago we used to have programs where someone could be paid while they were training for a job in a company. Those were federally subsidized, and they were good for the company, and good for trainees. There were also tax credits for companies that offered on-the-job training. Virtually all of those programs have been discontinued [the health care field does offer on-the-job training programs, not through federal programs, however]. If the refugee program had sufficient funds, that is where I would like to see them spent. Because, otherwise, you create a choice between training and working." *Tucson VOLAG representative*

<u>Poor economy, poor job market</u>

One VOLAG interviewee noted, "currently, we have an economy where we've lost 10,000 jobs from last September as compared to the previous September. And the number of employable persons has increased. Jobs are scarcer, and the areas where they are available are shifting. We have lost a lot of jobs in service and hospitality, because people are afraid to travel. We continue to have jobs in health care and elder care, requiring training and certification." The same interviewee reported a decrease in their rate of employment of employable refugees, from around 95% to around 80%.

> "Those of us working in refugee resettlement are committed to the idea that we are helping this country by helping refugees. They are making a contribution to this community and this country, and it more than pays for itself. We wish that the general public and policy makers would make the same commitment to human capital as they do to bombs. The little we spend on training and child care is well worth it." *Tucson VOLAG representative*

4. Options for improved training provision

BARA researchers asked for ideas from respondents about what might be useful approaches to training provision. The previous sections reported two prominent suggestions: on-the-job training, and more time for ESL training before being put into jobs. Other ideas included the following:

- Subsidies for training would be useful. Indeed, cost was listed frequently as a barrier to training, but one respondent noted that not everything should be free because there is a greater commitment to training if payment is required (respondent from a Tucson organization).

- There should be a period of time where *wages* could be subsidized so that training and ESL could be taken full time. Refugees could then be better prepared for the work force.

- One agency cannot do everything, but if each did something well, refugees could have ongoing training on different issues.

- There should be multiple locations where trainings can be accessed (suggested especially by respondents from Phoenix organizations)

- Intense, job-developer case management models can help determine how to utilize refugees' prior experience and determine what type of additional training is needed.

- Training could serve a dual purpose of giving life-skills (like sewing, cooking, childcare) that can lead to having potential job-skills.

- Extend provision of childcare for two months after completion of Maricopa Skills Center training so that refugees can find jobs.

- The most needed topics for life-skills training cited by various respondents were: an introduction to fraud; money systems in the U.S. and budgeting; learning reasonable expectations about life in the U.S.; information on health care systems; health care insurance; how high school credit and diplomas work; options for buying cars; how to deal with junk mail and telemarketers.

- For re-credentialing, there should be networking and linkages to the university to expose skilled/highly educated refugees to experience in their fields of expertise.

5. Summary of Findings

BARA researchers began interviews with the request for specific qualitative and quantitative data in mind concerning:

a) vocational and non-vocational training areas desired by refugees,
b) the number of refugees that would attend which training,
c) the number of refugees who would request assistance in securing college-level degrees and certificates,
d) the areas of re-credentialing or re-certification that refugees desire, and the number who would request assistance in these areas, and
e) preferences for utilizing vocational and non-vocational training (times, location).

What soon became clear is that the structural constraints to taking advantage of training opportunities are so serious that these issues assume tremendous salience for both refugees and organizations, making it very difficult to provide answers to the questions that were requested at the outset of this study, or to provide accurate quantitative data. What can be said is that English language competency is desired by everyone. Likewise, on-the-job training fits with the mandate for becoming employed within one to four months after arrival, and thereafter refugees experience tremendous competing demands on their time.

In response to questions (a) and (b), refugees arrive not knowing what training is available and hence what they would most desire in vocational training. Some refugees find out that computer training is available through MAAs and that it is a critical skill in the United States, so this training is in high demand, but it could be extended to include other training areas. Refugees have relatively few options available to them, but they survey and respond to those options. These two questions also relate to issues of re-credentialing and getting established in Arizona in occupations to which they bring existing skills. Thus, increased provision of professional job developers/training advisors who can address individual refugees' needs would be a useful systemic response to these questions.

With respect to question (c), interviews revealed significant differences of opinion within and between refugees and organizations. Some respondents indicated a strong desire for higher education amongst the

refugee population, others, mainly some VOLAGs felt that employment was more important and thus de-emphasized higher education needs of their refugee clients. There did appear to be some differences between ethnic groups with respect to this variable. It was reported that some Africans have great motivation to take advantage of any trainings offered to them and many Eastern Europeans and Kurds tend to have better education levels on arrival. There is, therefore likely to be strong demand particularly by some refugees and provision of support for them would be appreciated and utilized.

Six organizations attempted to quantify the numbers of refugees who already have credentials. These estimates ranged from five to 20 percent of refugees who have professional credentials and 20-50 percent who have trade certificates (question d). One organization estimated that only two percent of refugees attempt to pursue re-credentialing due to the difficulty and cost of this process. For this group of refugees a program to assist with re-credentialing would be very beneficial. Subject areas in need of re-credentialing/re-certification were reported as teaching, medical (nurses and doctors), law and engineering. Assistance with upgrading of trade skills such as auto-mechanic, truck driver and tailor was also perceived as a particular need by both organizations and focus group participants.

Finally, virtually everyone reported the need for flexibility in training provision with respect to time of day, days of the week, and location (question e). However, as noted in the following recommendations, making an adjustment to the structure of training versus job placement services as currently offered, in which the latter is prioritized, would address the question of flexibility in a way that was not, perhaps, envisioned at the outset of the study.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The approaches outlined below address the most prominent constraints for refugees to accessing training opportunities--competing demands on time, English competency, and cost.

A two-tier approach to training might be considered, based on prior experience and knowledge. Some refugees come into the U.S. without prior skills, and/or without English knowledge. Skill evaluation should become a *more emphasized* part of initial resettlement strategies where this is not already the case. ESL training could be appropriately targeted within each tier. And, for the tier in which refugees with experience/knowledge are placed, a job developer who works to expand opportunities in the refugee's career area might prove a good investment.

Both focus groups and interviews with organizations indicated that *English language training is of prime importance to the success of refugee resettlement.* While beyond BARA's scope of work to review the quality of existing ESL programs, it is suggested that an evaluation of these programs be completed. Refugees would benefit from high quality English language training and immersion training should be considered. Refugees would also benefit from access to university-based or community college ESL training. Once they achieve communicative competency, job-specific English training should be offered. The data from this research supports a concentrated provision of English training upon arrival, because it is the key to opening every other door of opportunity and adjustment for refugees. Several respondents suggested that ESL and job training could be combined. For example, learning English and computer skills at the same time would be a compatible and efficient combination.

The findings of the research team concerning the training programs at Maricopa Skills Center suggest that the duration of job training needs to be increased. If refugees could be 'employed' as trainees during their training program and this be incorporated into VOLAG agencies' employment ratings, this would help make training a priority for those who are best placed to make use of it.

Childcare needs to be provided with training, and training should be offered at flexible times and at times when transportation is available. The situation for women is particularly difficult in combining training/work and childcare responsibilities. Single parents, who are most often women, face an impossible situation, and cannot join the only program that might help them in Maricopa county: the RTAP Program at the Maricopa Skills Center. Some provision should be made in every training program to answer specifically to their needs.

Finally, creating a mechanism by which organizations can help refugees work through the re-credentialing process could be very helpful.

D. TRANSPORTATION

1. Introduction

In interviews with both refugee focus groups and refugee-serving organizations, the lack of adequate transportation emerged as a major factor limiting refugees' access to employment, childcare, training opportunities, and other essential needs. In both Pima and Maricopa Counties, refugees must travel long distances to reach workplaces or service centers by public transportation or in private vehicles. The inaccessibility or unreliability of transportation, coupled with extreme heat during the summer months, causes difficulty for refugees, particularly the elderly and those who travel with children. Accordingly, this chapter describes the current transportation practices of refugees in the two counties, highlighting factors that make transportation inadequate. After outlining the current situation, the chapter presents and comments on various options to better address the transportation needs of refugees.

Variation in transportation responses

The findings reported in this section are compiled from responses from 11 refugee focus groups, and 20 refugee-serving organizations (of which 8 were VOLAGs, and 12 were MAAs). During analysis of interview data about transportation, the BARA team disaggregated responses by county and by interview type (i.e., whether the responses came from a refugee focus group or a refugee-serving organization). Tallying the frequency of responses according to the disaggregated categories did not produce clear and instructive correlations. That is to say, both refugees and organizations provided similar responses to most questions, and trends in responses from both counties were also similar. The data in this chapter are therefore presented in aggregated form. However, whenever potentially significant differences by county or interview type (refugee/organization) emerged from the BARA team's analysis, these differences are noted.

2. Current transportation practices and constraints

Public transportation

Refugees and organizations in both study areas responded that, when refugees first arrive in Arizona, their primary mode of transportation is the bus system. All resettlement agencies offer information about how to use buses during the initial orientation that refugees receive upon arrival, and some agencies indicated that they assist refugees to acquire bus passes, either subsidizing purchases or distributing free monthly passes.

It is noteworthy, however, that both refugees and representatives of organizations considered the bus systems of Tucson and Phoenix inadequate in many ways. For example, many refugees obtain entry-level jobs, and therefore commonly work evening or night hours, as well as on weekends, when bus service is either drastically reduced or completely unavailable. This problem, reported in numerous interviews, is clearly illustrated by the case of one elderly refugee in Tucson (see box below).

Buses tend to run later in Phoenix than in Tucson, although accounts by refugees indicate that, despite improvements in recent years, the hours of operation for Phoenix's public transportation system remain inconvenient. Although agencies generally attempt to place refugees in housing near major bus lines, refugees maintained that their places of work are often far from bus lines, requiring them to walk long distances after reaching the nearest bus stop. This problem was noted by respondents in both study areas, but was mentioned more frequently by focus groups in Maricopa County. Refugees in Phoenix generally travel greater distances than those in Tucson from their homes to their workplaces. Many refugees live in the northwestern or central area of the Phoenix metropolitan area, but work in the Eastern Valley.

Inadequacy of Arizona Bus Services
Despite having a doctoral degree from his home country, an elderly African man has been employed in minimum-wage jobs cleaning offices and stores since his arrival in Arizona. His shift normally ends at 10:00 PM. By that time there are no buses, and he must walk for one hour and 15 minutes on Tucson's sometimes dangerous streets to return home every night.
Tucson focus group participant

Bicycles

One Phoenix agency distributes donated bicycles to refugee clients who can benefit from such assistance and, in Tucson, individual caseworkers sometimes direct refugees to the Bicycle Inter-Community Art and Salvage (BICAS) program, which sells used bicycles cheaply, and provides free training in bicycle maintenance and repair. One refugee interviewed in a Tucson focus group stated that young male Sudanese refugees commonly use bicycles. However, participants in another Tucson focus group reported that bicycles are neither appropriate nor useful for most refugees, particularly the elderly, those who have children, or women from countries where it is considered inappropriate for women to ride bicycles. Long distances between home and work, school, or other locations also limit the feasibility of bicycle riding as a transportation solution for most refugees.

Rides from agency staff and employers

Resettlement agency staff, members of MAAs or volunteers in both study areas often drive refugees to important events such as medical appointments and job interviews, especially during a refugee's initial months in the state. However, this practice was mentioned more often in Phoenix (one-third of organizations) than in Tucson. Equally important, several representatives from organizations noted that they incur significant "opportunity costs" when they assume responsibility for "shuttling" refugees, a time-consuming activity which delays the completion of other work.

In Tucson, one resort hotel that employs many refugees offers a van service for workers. The main disadvantage of this service is, once again, the time that transportation takes. However, transportation is also an additional operating expense for employers.

Almost all other refugees must provide their own transportation to work, as well as to training or childcare centers. One refugee who needs a car for work mentioned that his employer pays the car insurance.

Acquiring a vehicle

Interviews with both organizations and focus group discussions revealed a strong perception that having access to a vehicle is a crucial step toward self-sustainability for refugees in both Tucson and Phoenix. Although most organizations expressed this view, refugees voiced the perception even more strongly (nearly half of refugee groups raised this issue). The respondents noted that access to a vehicle is essential for finding and keeping a job, using childcare services (when desired), and taking advantage of training opportunities. Several refugee groups and Phoenix organizations (just over one-third of both categories) reported that car-pooling and ride-sharing are common. Yet some of these same respondents emphasized the limitations of those practices, and expressed a preference for car ownership. When asked to estimate the proportion of refugees who currently own cars, resettlement agencies in Tucson and in Phoenix reported that approximately 40 percent of their clientele are car-owners.

When refugee focus groups were asked to estimate how long it usually takes for refugees to acquire a vehicle, their responses clustered around one year. One Phoenix resettlement agency estimated that of

those refugees with jobs, approximately 50 percent are able to purchase a car within six months (sometimes sooner for participants in the Match Grant Program). Another agency estimated that 70 percent could buy a car within one year. By contrast, the estimate of one Phoenix MAA was significantly lower: only 25 percent of refugees have cars within the first year, according to its representatives. Another MAA added an important detail about differences of gender and ethnicity among refugees by noting that, among women, Africans tend to acquire cars earlier than Middle Easterners, largely, they speculate, because African women tend to exercise greater financial independence within the family.

Finally, it is important to note that car ownership by a family does not necessarily mean that all family members benefit equally from the vehicle. During one all-female focus group interview in Phoenix, refugees explained that their husbands or boyfriends control access to the family's car to go to work, while the women themselves were left to travel by bus to childcare facilities, schools, training sessions, agency offices, and their own jobs.

Obstacles to vehicle ownership

Four sets of obstacles to car ownership emerged clearly from both organization and focus group interviews, each obstacle being mentioned many times. Cost issues formed the first set of obstacles. Respondents referred not only to the initial purchase price of a car, but also to high insurance premiums (one Tucson refugee quoted an insurance premium of $960 for the first six months), and high maintenance costs.

As is the case for all Arizona drivers, insurance premiums reflect the age, gender, and driving history of individuals, as well as the age and model of a vehicle. However, for refugees, the high cost of insurance is often specifically related to frequent accidents, resulting from inadequate driver's training or the difficulties of reading traffic signs in English. Although one-third of the organizations interviewed raised insurance as an obstacle to transportation self-sustainability among refugees, it was mentioned in very few refugee focus groups. This disparity in the responses seems to confirm the observation from organizations that many refugees have no knowledge or limited understanding of insurance, and frequently drive without it.

Maintenance costs tend to be particularly high for refugees for three reasons. Most can only afford older, less expensive cars that usually require more careful routine maintenance and often cost more to repair when breakdowns occur. Many refugees are unfamiliar with basic maintenance routines which help to avoid costly repairs (e.g., changing the oil, and checking sparkplugs or tire pressure). In addition, driver's training that is too brief or otherwise inadequate leads to costly accidents. Car accidents, in turn, may initiate legal proceedings, which, if unresolved, create legal problems that may affect a refugee's immigration status. One respondent mentioned cases where refugees were deported in the wake of accident-related legal problems.

A second set of obstacles had to do with driving itself. Almost half of the refugee focus groups in Tucson, and the same proportion of organizations in both counties, mentioned that refugees have difficulty learning to drive, or acquiring a driver's license. As might be expected, older refugees encountered greater difficulty than younger people.

The fact that some car dealers take advantage of refugees creates a third set of obstacles to car ownership. Poor English skills, several refugees stressed, contribute significantly to this problem. Refugee-serving organizations, particularly in Phoenix, reported that certain private car dealers charge refugees excessively high prices, demand higher interest rates for financing, and sell buyers a poor-quality vehicle (a "lemon"). For some refugees, low levels of English proficiency and lack of experience with cars or long-term planning to purchase high-priced goods compound their vulnerability to such unfair treatment.

Finally, a fourth set of obstacles to car ownership is related to the refugees' unfamiliarity with American credit systems, especially regarding the need to establish a credit history in order to be deemed creditworthy. Several organizations (one-fourth) mentioned that refugees are sometimes incur higher finance charges on loans than other car-buyers, and some refugee focus groups in both cities revealed that refugees must usually save until they can pay cash for a vehicle, because they have no credit history. The case below illustrates the connections among the four sets of obstacles to car ownership.

> ***Refugees' Susceptibility to Rogue Car Dealers***
> A woman from the former Soviet Union recounted her experience: "I bought a 13-year-old Ford for $1,700 and spent $1,000 on repairs. I wanted to trade it in, so I asked a car dealership how much would it cost for a new car? I was a perfect catch for the car dealer. He gave me a nice lunch and roses and I bought a car the same day for 24 percent interest, as I didn't have a credit history. This was not because I had a bad credit history; I just didn't have any history. He sold me a one-year-old Kia, a nice car, nice color for $9,000, giving me $2,500 for my old car even though I'd only paid $1,700 for it. When I told my friends, they were shocked and offered to pay off my loan, and for me to pay them back interest free." A Bosnian woman who participated in the same interview said that she wouldn't have been able to obtain that sort of credit from her social network.

A staff member of a resettlement agency shared an equally illustrative example with the BARA team. When he asked what interest rates his refugee staff were paying for their cars, he found that the Ethiopian was paying 18 percent and the Bosnian 6 percent, whereas he (a white US citizen) was paying 3 percent.

3. Currently operating transportation assistance programs

One Phoenix organization described Maricopa County's Worklinks Program, that provide bus passes to people who need transportation to work, to reduce their dependence on welfare assistance. Numerous refugee clients had used the Program in the past, the respondent noted, but increasing restrictions and decreasing funding have reduced its scope and effectiveness.

Another Phoenix organization encourages people to donate old cars, which the agency repairs and gives to its refugee clients. Approximately 35 to 40 families receive cars in this way each year.

An organization that operates in both Phoenix and Tucson described its Individual Development Account (IDA) Matching Funds Program, which refugees often use to buy cars. The organization feels that this fairly new program has been successful so far, but some refugees emphasized its shortcomings. According to one Tucson refugee focus group, saving money in order to participate in this IDA program requires both a husband and wife to work, which is difficult if the couple does not already have a vehicle and, if they are parents, adequate childcare. The IDA program will be discussed further in the "Options" section below.

Maricopa County offers the Refugee Targeted Assistance Program (RTAP). In refugee households having at least one employed adult, the other adult is eligible to receive training, with no-cost transportation to the training center and childcare. However, one drawback of the RTAP Program, which focus groups underscored, is that it cannot be taken advantage of by single parents.

One Tucson MAA offers subsidized driver's training to refugees through a contract with a private driving school. This program's main target beneficiaries are women, who receive a larger subsidy than men. Women pay $60 for eight hours of driving lessons, whereas men pay $250. However, the program can only accommodate a limited number of trainees, and the waiting list may last as long as three to four months. In the past year only 11 women benefited from subsidized driver's training. Unlike the Tucson program, organizations in Phoenix rely on volunteers, who are often affiliated with local churches, to

conduct driver's training sessions for refugees.

4. Options for improved transportation provision

The BARA team's major research objective with regard to transportation was to gather information that would allow the Refugee Resettlement Program of Arizona (RRP) to understand perceptions of, and attitudes toward, two possible assistance options among service-providers and refugees themselves. The first option is to offer refugees a cash grant of up to $2,000 to help them purchase vehicles, on condition that the vehicle would be used primarily for work. The second option is to launch a repair assistance program, which would help refugees to maintain their vehicles in a serviceable and safe condition. Responses, both from organizations and refugees alike, revealed a more nuanced picture than the BARA research team had anticipated. *Responding to direct questions about the two RRP options, participants in interviews with organizations and refugee focus groups fell into two camps: those who felt that both proposals would be useful and taken up by all refugees; and those who cautioned against providing "anything for free,"* warning that the potential for abuse would be high, especially in the repair assistance program. However, both organizations and refugee focus groups furnished respondents with opportunities to express many interesting preferences and models of transportation assistance, in addition to the two proposed RRP options. These suggestions, including the responses to the vehicle purchase and repair assistance options, are described below:

<u>Vehicle purchase assistance program (e.g., cash grant of up to $2,000)</u>

This proposal was approved by over half of the refugee focus groups, with a stronger preference for it in Phoenix than in Tucson. Two of the focus groups consisted entirely of women. Almost one-third of the organizations approved this proposal, most of them MAAs in Phoenix. One Phoenix MAA suggested the program would be most useful to families with a single wage-earner. One refugee focus group in Tucson suggested that such assistance should only be offered to the most needy of new refugees, specifically single parents with children. However, nearly one-third of all organizations warned against the vehicle purchase assistance program, and those responses were equally divided between service providers and MAAs. The representative of one resettlement agency in Tucson expressed the following concern: "People need to learn that nothing is for free in this country. The problem with refugees being given things free for 3 months [is that] they begin to think that everything will be free." In Phoenix, in particular, many organizations emphasized that a similar program already exists, citing the IDA savings scheme.

<u>Individual Development Account (IDA)</u>

Half of the organizations interviewed and just less than one-fourth of the refugee focus groups mentioned this IDA savings program as a successful effort to provide refugees with matching funds to buy cars. It was not, however, without criticism. Some respondents considered the program to be limited (i.e., it can only accommodate a relatively small number of clients each year). Apart from that limitation, other respondents perceived the program's eligibility criteria to be restrictive. In order to qualify, respondents maintained, a refugee family must earn sufficient income to permit savings, and continue to save for six months. At least two adults must be employed (or one must have multiple jobs) to achieve these objectives, several refugees explained, which is difficult if the family does not already have access to reliable transportation.

Access to credit for purchasing vehicles

Responses from nearly half of refugee focus groups and one-third of organizations favored a program that offers low-interest loans. Borrowing privileges for refugees would be linked to training, as well as assistance to establish a credit history. For many refugees, respondents reported, credit is a new concept about which they must quickly learn. However, there was some variability by ethnic group in responses to questions about this issue during focus group discussions. For example, the Kurdish and Vietnamese groups expressed their aversion to the concept of credit. At other focus groups, participants mentioned that some Africans have experience with "money clubs" (revolving credit schemes) in their countries, and have set up such clubs here in Arizona. Other refugees, particularly former Soviet nationals, seem to have very strong social networks through which informal credit can be obtained.

An "approved" car dealer program

One organization and one refugee focus group, both in Phoenix, suggested this program option as a way to direct refugees to reputable, authorized outlets for purchasing vehicles. The Department of Economic Security (DES) could certify, or even subsidize, a private car dealership to sell cars to refugees. The dealer would purchase cheap but reliable used cars from auctions. This program could be combined with the "approved garage" program for car repair assistance, which is described below. Participants in one Phoenix refugee focus group explained that refugees would more easily trust a private dealer not to take advantage of their limited English or lack of knowledge about cars if that dealer had a relationship with the DES or resettlement agencies.

Nonprofit agency to provide vehicles

Another option which respondents proposed would be to have a nonprofit agency become the outlet for vehicles. As mentioned earlier, one Phoenix resettlement agency provides 35 to 40 families per year with cars from private donors. Another program, Wheels-to-Work, is no longer in operation because it was perceived to be inefficient. However, this program could provide another model from which positive lessons might be drawn. One refugee interviewed in Tucson acquired a car through Wheels-to-Work. Through contract with a private agency, the state funded program distributed donated cars to 548 people during its three years of operation. Car donors received up to $1,500 in tax deductions, and participants leased cars for twelve months at $20 per month, after which time they were granted full title. The program was not specifically targeted at refugees, but rather to anyone receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Participants were required to furnish proof of employment and ability to purchase car insurance, demonstrate the need for a vehicle to reach their workplace, and obtain a driver's license. Cars were inspected for safety by a third party, and participants took classes in basic car maintenance.

The final section of this chapter lists sources of additional information about similar programs in cities around the United States.

Training

The need for training was strongly emphasized by respondents. More than half of all refugee focus groups and organizations recommended training. Support for training was especially high among the Tucson refugees, and organizations in Phoenix and Tucson expressed their support in nearly equal proportions. The most important training needs identified were driving skills, and assistance to buy cars, obtain insurance and maintain vehicles in working order. There was one suggestion that training in budgeting is an essential part of car ownership. As described above, only one organization currently offers a formal driver's training program, and it is more heavily subsidized for women than men. The

program is already so popular among refugees that it cannot meet the demand for its services. Expansion of such a program would represent an efficient and highly useful allocation of state funds.

Re-certification program for refugee mechanics

Responses from three organizations indicated a need to provide training for car mechanics. Many refugees, especially from certain ethnic groups, have worked as mechanics in their countries of origin and would like to be re-certified, or formally trained in the United States. These "certified mechanics" could then be integrated into the "approved garage" program offering car repair services, or they might be helped to set up small businesses that serve the refugee community, but would not necessarily limit their services to refugees.

Car repair assistance program (cash assistance)

The refugee focus group responses to direct questions furnished very little hard evidence to support, or reject, this proposed RRP program. Yet over one-third of the organizations interviewed approved of a repair program, whereas another one-third either advised against offering such a program, or warned of the potential abuses, and emphasized the need for close monitoring to ensure proper accountability. There were three other suggestions to offer a program of this sort in conjunction with the car repair classes at local vocational/technical schools, an "approved" garage program, or a nonprofit agency, which might also act, in collaboration with a private firm, as an "approved" car dealer.

Ride-to-work/training/childcare

Less than one-fourth of the refugee-serving organizations interviewed suggested upgrading provisions to help refugees get to work (especially during their initial months as Arizona residents). It is equally important, respondents noted, to provide transportation to training and childcare facilities. Many of these services are currently provided by caseworkers in resettlement agencies, MAAs and volunteers who are typically affiliated with churches. One agency in Phoenix has raised funds for a contract with a commercial transportation service to meet its clients' transport needs. The only other Program currently offering transportation service for training and childcare is the RTAP in Maricopa County.

Refugee Targeted Assistance Program (RTAP)

A few respondents from organizations and refugee focus groups mentioned the transportation component of the RTAP. This Program appears to work well, except for the lengthy travel time between homes, childcare centers and the training center. Therefore, the RTAP might be used as a model for integrated service provision. However, the Program's vehicle repair component is small and poorly advertised, possibly due to its very limited availability.

Refugee Targeted Assistance Program (RTAP)
The RTAP, in operation since 1997, offers free transportation (pick-up and drop-off) by Maricopa County Transportation Services in conjunction with training programs at the Maricopa Skills Center. The transportation includes taking children of refugee trainees to the childcare center of their choice. If the trainee already has a car (and about half of them do), there is a monthly gas allowance of $50 for up to six months. This does not cover the entire training period, or the subsequent period when trainees will enter the job market. In addition, the Program also makes a very small number of positions available (only nine each year) in its vehicle repair scheme, which offers $500 per year for car maintenance.

5. Recommendations

The BARA team's most general recommendation concerning transportation is that no single program can encompass the variety of options and preferences expressed by the refugee population in Pima and Maricopa Counties. *More specifically, however, the team recommends that steps be taken to address the immediate transportation constraints of refugees by providing refugees with more flexible forms of assistance during the first six months after they arrive in Arizona.*

Flexible assistance could take many forms. One would be continued, and gradually expanded, support for the current practices of issuing free bus passes, providing bicycles and associated maintenance training, and promoting ride-to-work programs. Funding might also be made available to formalize the existing practice of informal ride assistance for refugees, for which staff members of refugee-serving organizations, and volunteers from both resettlement agencies and MAAs now assume responsibility. Despite the "opportunity costs" of this assistance to the providers of informal transportation, the assistance is of immeasurable importance to refugees, given that it helps them look for work, get to work, and keep various job-, training-, or family-related appointments. In this connection, the Refugee Resettlement Program of Arizona might establish contracts with commercial transportation services, in order to reduce the workloads on refugee-serving organization staff. Refugees would benefit a great deal if funds were available to support ride-sharing and car-pooling, especially when they first settle in the state. For example, gas vouchers might be an effect mechanism of funding support. Finally, certain employers, such as hotels or resorts in Tucson, hire large numbers of refugees. The RRP, and other state agencies, might collaborate in an effort to establish public-private partnerships that encourage employers to play a greater role in providing transportation for their employees. Similarly, employers might also be encouraged to participate in the establishment of auto loan guarantee programs, or savings matching schemes, to help employees buy vehicles.

The BARA team also strongly recommends that the RRP give careful consideration to the transportation options and models that emerged from interviews with refugee-serving organizations, and from focus group discussions with refugees themselves. Four of these options/models should be topics of additional research, reflection, and discussion.

a. A combined training/car purchase program: Such a program should include educational components focusing on buying cars, obtaining a driver's license and insurance, basic car maintenance, and budgeting to meet the demands of long-term expenditures. The training could be organized in phases, such that, upon completion of each, refugees would be offered an incentive to help defray the cost of owning and operating a car. Adequate training would thus be a prerequisite to any financial assistance.

b. A low-interest loan program: Once again, this program would be closely linked to effective training. However, training would focus specifically on the American concept of credit; the varied forms of credit and credit institutions in this country; the advantages/disadvantages of credit ceilings, interest rates and repayment schedules; and the implications of each feature of the American credit system for establishing a sound personal credit history.

c. An "approved garage" program and/or nonprofit agency specializing in buying and selling used cars: The program would provide reliable, reasonably priced repair services, transmit information about, if not actually offer training to, apprentice mechanics, and facilitate the re-certification of refugees who are already skilled mechanics so that they can become gainfully employed.

d. Additional multifaceted training for drivers and prospective drivers: Assistance here might include subsidized driving lessons (using the model currently operating in Tucson) and training in car buying,

ownership and maintenance.

6. Additional sources of information

A variety of models of transportation assistance programs currently operate in communities across the United States. Although most of the programs do not specifically target refugee populations, these populations face many of same challenges as non-refugee populations—namely, low income, evening or late-night work schedules, and inadequate transportation to work, training, and childcare. The following agencies and individuals are resources in their own right, and will be able to provide further information.

The Community Transportation of Southern Arizona Advisory Board has been in operation but is in the process of closing. Nonetheless, Jule Drown is a contact. (jdrown@comcast.net, telephone 520-743-8585). She is knowledgeable about transportation issues facing low-income families in the region, recently wrote a summary of conference proceedings on the links between employment and transportation for low-income people, and is familiar with programs in other cities where low-income workers are aided with vehicle purchase.

Models of relevant programs in other regions of the country are available at the website of the Community Transportation Association of America (www.ctaa.org). Charlie Dickson, Associate Director of CTAA (202-661-0208), or Carolyn Jeskey (202-624-1724) are key resource persons. The CTAA also looks beyond car ownership to other ways of augmenting public transportation, including the use of dedicated buses and vans, taxi vouchers, bicycle programs, and rides from volunteers (http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/practices). Information from around the country on job-related transportation assistance is available by exploring the "more info" links on another section of the CTAA site (http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/is_employment.asp).

The Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC) is a national grant program administered by the Federal Transit Administration that provides states and communities with funding to expand employment transportation programs and services. The grant requires a 50 percent match. Detailed information on this program is also available through the CTAA website (http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/atj/jarc.asp).

Bicycle Inter-Community Art and Salvage (BICAS) is a nonprofit community cooperative in Tucson which is dedicated to promoting and recycling bicycles, promoting bicycle awareness, selling used bicycles and operating a full repair shop and running classes where people can learn about bicycle maintenance and repair (http://www.consensus.net/about_bicas.html).

IV. CROSS CUTTING THEMES

A. Introduction

At the end of each interview with an organization, BARA researchers asked respondents to step back from the specifics of childcare, training and transportation, and to think about the wider context of refugee and refugee-serving organization experiences in Arizona. These questions were meant to tap into the conceptual model each respondent carries of the overall refugee service system, and to gauge perceptions of the landscape of options. Interviewees provided varied, often impassioned responses to these questions, which are grouped here in three cross-cutting thematic areas: better accommodating the refugee experience, logistics of organizations, and inter-agency cooperation and coordination.

B. Better accommodating the refugee experience

Several refugee-serving organizations reflected on how the overall experience of the refugee might be improved. Beyond the specifics of childcare, transportation and training, these reflections got to the heart of the "vicious circle" that refugees face – a problem described throughout this report. Respondents from organizations describe this circle as the pull between establishing economic independence soon after arrival, acquiring English and job-related skills, and balancing childcare and other household needs. Two organizations offered "ideal scenarios" that radically restructure the first year of settlement in attempt to alter the cycle. Both scenarios involve the establishment of a longer (greater than six month) orientation for refugees upon arrival. Specific training, transportation and childcare solutions mentioned in proceeding chapters would be activated during this orientation period. A key difference – programs during the orientation period are not tied to whether the refugee obtains a job. One organization, for instance, offered the following solution:

> ***Refugee Resettlement Restructured – scenario 1***
> When they first come, they should place the refugee in a mandatory eight month program focused on English skills development. During the eight months the refugee would be involved in all sorts of training and orientations, and they would be advised to make the most of this period. After eight months they should be obligated to find a job. Case managers would then follow-up every three months to each of the families to assess their current needs. For those arriving with degrees and good English skills, they [could opt out of the eight months and] be put into a re-credentializing program and then given a low-interest loan so that they could start working. The current system is that resettlement agencies only give the refugees three months, they tell them to go to the school but they don't necessarily check up on them, and during this time they have to look for a job. The refugees have to have more time up front, and the refugees need more orientation and follow up.

Another agency suggested a similar scenario:

> ***Refugee Resettlement Restructured – scenario 2***
> We swamp them with so much at first that they are overwhelmed. The ideal way would be to bring them in, and for six months say, "we are going to help educate you. We'll get you school for ESL, vocational training and life-skills." After this period the refugee will be more ready, and we can help find them a job. Then we'll provide ongoing training in many areas. But this is never going to happen; the federal government expects employable refugees to be working immediately. The closer we get to [the former], the better.

Although other organizations did not go as far as to suggest a restructured period of immersion, the idea that refugees need more time to gain solid English skills before finding a job appears across organizations' responses, and was re-emphasized in the responses to the final summary questions.

To evaluate this idea, refugee-serving organizations would want a lengthened program of orientation weighed against the goal of refugee self sufficiency: i.e., would increasing the role and control of the

resettlement agency during the first year have the effect of stalling refugee self sufficiency? Proponents of longer orientation would argue that, to the contrary, more help "up front" increases self sufficiency across refugee populations over the medium to long run. As one Mutual Assistance Association (MAA) explained, "If you can help them within the first year, that's all we need." The question of dependency may be tied more to the form of aide – most refugees and agencies are against "handouts" – not the timing of aide, in which more up front programming, such as a six to eight month intensive orientation, might correlate to improved long term self sufficiency.

C. Logistics of organizations

The second thematic area that emerged at the end of the interviews concerns capacity building within organizations. Service-providers were asked to comment on how their service delivery in general might be improved in terms of wider logistical constraints. Three organizations commented on funding structures. One organization noted that subsidy programs, if handled in certain ways, could become a logistical "nightmare." If organizations are required to track refugee receipts as refugees attempt to access subsidized goods or services (childcare, cars, repairs, food, training or otherwise), the paperwork obligations could be significant. One refugee-serving organization expressed concern that increased paperwork reinforces an "institutional" relationship between service providers and refugees that erodes trust. Research by BARA suggests that there are subsidy programs within refugee services that are relatively successful in avoiding this issue, and with careful planning new subsidy programs could be designed to minimize bureaucratic overhead.

In addition, two respondents commented on the structure of funding in relation to capacity building, commenting on the need for more "flexibility" in how funds are earmarked. One agency recommended channeling more funds through the relocation adjustment program so that other programs in childcare, transportation and training could be integrated up front. Another interviewee suggested that state programs should be available to every agency rather than partitioned out through separate Request For Proposals. These state programs, according to the respondent, are what make Arizona a prime resettlement state. This reputation would only improve if programs were available to all agencies. Apart from these comments, other organizations did not mention the distribution of state or federal funds, so it is not clear whether these opinions are generally held.

A separate though related theme to the distribution of funds, is the distribution of programs across agencies. This topic came up in several interviews, and forms the basis of the third thematic area – interagency cooperation and coordination.

D. Interagency cooperation and coordination

Respondents discussed interagency coordination in three areas: (1) between resettlement agencies; (2) between resettlement agencies and MAAs; and (3) between refugee serving organizations generally and other public service organizations. In the first area, several respondents felt that the entire resettlement agency system is too confusing to both refugees and service organizations alike. One respondent suggested that the system could be simplified with a "magnet-school" like model in which each agency specializes in certain training and service areas. Another echoed these ideas, suggesting that too much overlap between agencies serves to artificially divide the refugee community between agencies. Resettlement agencies should ideally be referring clients to other resettlement agencies according to the strengths of the agencies and the needs of the client. These two comments for increased specialization might be grouped with a that of a third organization, a MAA who believes the situation would be more "user friendly" if refugees could be given a checklist of exactly where to go and what to do for each category of training and service needs.

It is not clear whether a majority of resettlement agencies would prefer more specialized roles, but universally they agree that new forums for communication are needed if they hope to simplify the overall system or leverage each other's efforts. The structured and formal nature of the regular monthly resettlement agency meetings can make it difficult to brainstorm new forms of collaboration.

Likewise there is a general desire for greater communication between resettlement agencies and MAAs. MAA's are frequently established by former refugees and immigrants whose personal experience is valuable to incoming refugees. Although in the past many resettlement agencies and community-based organizations were distrustful of one another and rarely collaborated, respondents believed that this tension has since dissipated. One way to encourage collaboration would be to build it into the funding system; at least two of the MAAs interviewed would like state and federal programs to promote collaboration through their funding initiatives. By themselves, MAAs are too understaffed and time-constrained to compete for project grants alone. There are examples of collaboration in Phoenix that might serve as models, such as the Libraries for the Future project of the Valley of the Sun Refugee and Immigrant Serving Agencies (VISA) in partnership with Phoenix-based resettlement agencies.

Furthering the idea for more collaboration, two organizations proposed the creation of an "umbrella" organization that would improve the capacity of all agencies to network. One described this as a refugee "council" that would establish a code of ethics that has the best interests of the refugees in mind. The council would direct new efforts when people want to help new communities, help facilitate informed decision making driven by larger objectives of self sufficiency, and create a mechanism for sharing solutions through formal channels. Other organizations suggested more informal solutions unrelated to a formal governing body. Generally there is high demand for new forums for generating ideas and creative solutions, and there is recognition that MAAs have an important role to play as a voice for refugees in decision making.

In the final area – collaboration between agencies and the wider community, one organization mentioned a successful program with the Phoenix police department in which cooperation resulted in an effective initiative against illegal trafficking in human labor. There are other examples of important partnerships with outside community organizations, such as the Refugee Council on Crime, that have served refugee interests. Respondents believe such efforts should be promoted.

E. Conclusion

These cross-cutting themes reveal the breadth and depth of the capacity of refugee-serving organizations to generate innovative solutions in the interests of refugees. There is a general willingness to increase collaboration between agencies, to better accommodate refugee needs, and to work under common objectives. Our dialogue with service agencies revealed important insights on the wider system in areas such as timing, funding and organization.

V. CONCLUSIONS

On behalf of the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP), the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA) interviewed both service providers and refugees in an effort to improve understanding in three areas of refugee need in Tucson and Phoenix – childcare, training and transportation. This section summarizes the specific issues and recommendations explored in the previous chapters, and offers discussion of the wider context in which these needs occur. This summary is followed by recommendations of future areas of potential research on the topic of refugee resettlement.

A. Childcare

The BARA study found that access to quality childcare is of significant concern for the majority of refugees participating in this study. Currently, most refugees utilize informal, unpaid childcare mechanisms. The most common solution is for parents to alternate schedules or resort to single-spouse care (most often women) to meet their childcare needs. Extended family and ethnic networks are the second most common approach to childcare. Friends and neighbors offer ad hoc support, but not to a degree that permits sustained, long-term work.

The smaller percentage of refugees who have experience with formal childcare include households with children who qualify for DES financial childcare assistance. Single Afghani mothers, for instance, tend to qualify for DES subsidies and use commercial childcare facilities. Refugees appreciate and use *informal* (unpaid*)* childcare provided by some organizations in conjunction with another service, such as on-the-job childcare at hospitals, or when refugee service providers offer childcare with trainings. The Refugee Targeted Assistance Program (RTAP) has integrated training, transportation and childcare needs in Maricopa County, and refugees participating in this program claim they could not attend the trainings without childcare support service.

There are a variety of constraints limiting refugees' access to quality childcare services. These include cultural, logistical, institutional and financial considerations. Refugees may arrive in Arizona with no prior knowledge of formal childcare, while childcare providers sometimes do not have a good understanding of the cultural concerns of refugee families. Refugees surveyed expressed diverse values of what constitutes "quality" in childcare, including perceptions of hygienic practices, safety precautions, and sleep schedules. Logistical constraints to obtaining childcare include language barriers, lack of information about options, transportation constraints, and inadequate hours of operation. Further, formal childcare is beyond the financial means of the vast majority of refugee families. The current DES childcare subsidies are provided on a sliding scale basis, for which the eligibility criteria excludes a majority of refugee families in need of assistance.

BARA compiled recommendations from refugees and refugee-serving organizations to address these identified constraints. Approximately three-fourths of the refugee focus groups and nearly half of the refugee-serving organizations approved of the proposal of a refugee childcare center. Another suggestion was to incorporate refugee staff into existing childcare centers. Whatever the type of arrangement, a childcare center should ideally be located either at the refugees place of work or near their homes.

Several other solutions and recommendations in the area of childcare emerged from respondents. These suggestions include: increasing provision for childcare linked to training and transportation either through the Refugee Targeted Assistance Program or similar Program; increasing childcare provision within refugee-serving organizations; assistance in formalizing some informal childcare arrangements, such as certifying in-home childcare facilities; and increasing education of refugees about childcare and of childcare centers about refugee-specific needs.

Childcare programs should be flexible in both availability and structure, and sensitive to refugee schedules and cultural beliefs. Most importantly, childcare must be made affordable to the refugee, whether through subsidies or low-cost center options that ideally also provides employment for refugees.

B. Training

Competence in English, training that builds skills useful for the job market, and (for many refugees) validation of professional skills acquired in their countries of origin are crucial elements to becoming productive members of American society. Existing programs aid in accomplishing these goals, but significant obstacles still hamper effective and useful training for many refugees. In project interviews, the most-cited constraint was a lack of the necessary English skills to take advantage of training opportunities. Responses indicated that ESL training was neither intense enough for certain respondents, nor sufficiently available given competing demands on time (because of the necessity to quickly find any form of employment). These demands further reduce the ability for refugees to concentrate sufficiently on English during their initial months in-country. The low-wage jobs refugees often take offer little opportunity to improve English skills. Problems with childcare and transportation also reduce refugees' access to training programs.

In Maricopa County, some respondents noted limitations in the variety, quality, and duration of training at the Maricopa Skills Center, although its combined approach to training, childcare, and transportation is particularly well suited to the needs of female refugees. In Pima County, costs limit some refugees' ability to access education at community colleges, while support for job-specific training is limited. Existing computer training is well attended but limited both in scope and in ties to employment opportunities. Finally, for refugees who arrive with advanced education or skill levels, job-specific English training, assistance with re-credentialing, and job placement in positions related to their former professions, are strong perceived needs.

Research results suggest specific courses of action. Additional emphasis on skills assessment during the initial resettlement phases would improve the ability of refugee-serving organizations to target the English and job-specific training needs of refugees. Data from this research also supports the perceived need for increased emphasis on English training during the initial months after arrival, because respondents identify language skills as the key to all other doors of opportunity and adjustment. Flexible hours, consideration of refugees' transportation challenges, and provision for childcare are all crucial to improving the effectiveness of training programs. Training programs should take advantage of refugees who can transfer useful skills to other refugees. As seen from interview responses related to the Maricopa Skills Center, such programs must also be made more accessible to single female refugees, particularly those with children. Finally, this research strongly suggests that assisting highly-skilled refugees with re-credentialing in their former professions would benefit both refugees and American society as a whole.

C. Transportation

In both Pima and Maricopa Counties, refugees must travel long distances to reach workplaces or service centers by public transportation or in private vehicles. The inaccessibility or unreliability of transportation causes difficulty for refugees, particularly the elderly and those who travel with children.

The primary mode of transportation for refugees in the first year is the bus system, and resettlement agencies often provide recently-arrived refugees with bus passes. However, bus schedules inappropriate to refugees' work schedules, and the limited utility of bicycles for the elderly and families, create a situation in which refugees prefer car ownership. The majority of respondents noted that access to a vehicle is essential for finding and keeping a job, using childcare services (when desired), and taking advantage of training opportunities.

Many refugees take advantage of carpooling and van services, but these services can be cost-prohibitive to service providers, volunteers and employers.

When asked to estimate the proportion of refugees who currently own cars, resettlement agencies in Tucson and Phoenix reported that 40% of their clients are car-owners. It is important to note that car ownership by a family does not necessarily mean that all family members (particularly women) benefit equally from the vehicle.

Cost issues are serious obstacles to car ownership. Respondents referred not only to the initial purchase price of a car, but also to high insurance premiums, and high maintenance costs. Refugees have a high incidence of accidents, resulting from inadequate driver's training and experience. Maintenance costs are particularly high for the older used vehicles refugees can afford. Another obstacle includes the long time it can take for some refugees to learn to drive. Additionally, car dealers may take advantage of the refugee's lack of English skills or knowledge about cars and offer high interest rates, or substandard cars. A final set of obstacles to car ownership is related to refugees' unfamiliarity with American credit systems, especially regarding the need to establish a credit history in order to be deemed creditworthy.

The BARA research team asked respondents whether purchase assistance (up to $2,000) and repair subsidies would be preferred options for refugees. Some respondents felt that both proposals would be useful and taken up by all refugees, while others cautioned against providing "anything for free," warning that the potential for abuse would be high, especially in the repair assistance program. However, interviews with both organizations and refugee focus groups furnished respondents with opportunities to express many interesting preferences and models of transportation assistance, in addition to the two proposed RRP options.

In a program offering low-interest loans, borrowing privileges for refugees would be linked to training, as well as assistance to establish a credit history. Another favored option was an "approved" car dealer program that could certify, or even subsidize, a private car dealership to sell cars to refugees. A nonprofit agency could also become the outlet for vehicles. The need for training in car ownership, maintenance, safety, insurance and laws was strongly emphasized by respondents. Responses also indicated the potential of re-certifying refugees with car mechanic training. With regards to repair subsidies, there were suggestions to offer a program of this sort in conjunction with the car repair classes at local vocational/technical schools, with an "approved" garage program, or with a nonprofit agency.

Given these findings, BARA offers several recommendations. One would be support for the current practices of issuing free bus passes, providing bicycles and associated maintenance training, and promoting ride-to-work programs. Funding might also be made available to formalize the existing practice of informal ride assistance for refugees, for which staff members of service-provider organizations, and volunteers from both resettlement agencies and MAAs now assume responsibility. In this connection, the Refugee Resettlement Program of Arizona might establish contracts with commercial transportation services, in order to reduce the workloads on provider-agency staff. Refugees would benefit from funds to support ride-sharing and car-pooling, especially when they first settle in the state. Finally, the RRP and other state agencies might collaborate in an effort to establish public-private partnerships that encourage employers to play a greater role in providing transportation for the refugees among their employees. In general, the transportation solutions offered by respondents include four main components: a combined training/car purchase program; a low-interest loan program; an "approved garage" program and/or nonprofit agency specializing in buying and selling used cars; and expanded driver training.

D. Additional themes

A connecting issue highlighted repeatedly in this report is language. English acquisition has already been treated in detail, but broad communication issues cross-cut all service areas, and have powerful effects on the earning-power of refugees over the long run. More than an issue of simple English acquisition, refugees need access to translated information soon after arrival. Standardizing and streamlining translation would anticipate some of the issues brought up in interviews and focus groups, such as the need for basic information on middle and high school systems and American health care, translated for refugees in their native tongue. Likewise the Pima or Maricopa County Guides to Refugee Service Providers could be translated for all refugee groups. Several refugees discussed a need for translators in certain critical situations, like emergency hospital visits or encounters with the police, and formal connections to translator services might be a solution.

It is worth mentioning here that health and legal issues are two additional areas of concern that were raised by refugees and service providers without prompting. Refugees experience much confusion around the American health and judicial system, but are at greater risk when they run into problems in these areas. Traffic accidents in particular can incur both high legal, medical and insurance costs that together create formidable setbacks for refugees. Any additional (translated) information upfront in these two areas would be extremely valuable to a refugee.

E. Process

Of equal importance to the *type* of solutions proposed above in the areas of childcare, training, and transportation, is the *process* by which solutions are offered and advanced. The structural dynamics of any project are relevant to the outcome and likelihood of success. As such, the BARA team asked service providers and refugees to think more broadly about the study questions and what might be needed to make positive changes in refugee lives in Arizona.

The findings of the study suggest that a reasonable extended investment in the initial adjustment period might yield positive long-term consequences. These adjustments include a multi-month period of immersion in English and life skills training, followed by vocational assistance that may include help with re-credentialing. Additional up-front financial investments in childcare and transportation would also greatly improve the period of initial adjustment. Finally, successfully addressing the varied vocational and English competencies that incoming refugees exhibit could flow from a two-track system based on existing educational achievement and marketable skill levels at the time of entry.

Our interviews with service providing organizations also indicate strong support for increased collaboration and information channels between administrators, service providers, refugees and the wider community. Critical examination occurs when service providers share experiences; it could be very useful to convene a focus group of representatives, or "umbrella organization" that is charged with suggesting designs for an effective response to existing dilemmas. This would allow service providers to (a) contribute their knowledge and (b) begin to develop a consensus about how to accomplish goals.

Funding structures that encourage (not mandate) collaborative partnerships between resettlement agencies, community based organizations and/or other community organizations will bring in partners that cannot compete for grants alone, as well as enhance interagency communication. A commonly cited example of collaboration among the Phoenix area refugee series providers is the Refugee Advisory Council on Crime (RACC). This council brought together representatives from different refugee community organizations, resettlement agencies and the police department. One of the primary objectives was to establish a mechanism for two-way discussion about issues of crime as they pertained to the refugee community. Solutions were then developed, taking into consideration the unique perspectives

of all council members. As a result of this collaboration, a series of successful community workshops were held, focusing on a variety of topics pertaining to U.S. law that were deemed important by the council. This is an example of how designing for two-way communication can be key to the successful implementation of a project.

F. Recommendations for Future Study

Like all research initiatives, this study revealed many avenues for possible new research in addition to its findings. BARA identified the following as the most important for follow up:

- Intra-agency research: Service providers could be encouraged to design more systematic monitoring and participatory feedback systems into their project proposals to allow for easier and more immediate research and evaluation of programs in the interest of refugees.
- A more comprehensive assessment of the refugee experience in Arizona would require many months of study, and would include statistically valid sampling methods. Refugees would be chosen external to resettlement agencies for a more representative sample of the opinions and situations of Arizona refugees. Such an assessment should also explore the areas of health and legal information identified as additional priorities among refugees.
- Finally, the research team suggests an independent assessment of the English training options available to refugees. Ideally conducted by specialists in English acquisition, this assessment would provide recommendations in the area of curriculum, scheduling and availability, and timing of immersion.

ATTACHMENT I - A: Survey for Organizations

Rapid Refugee Services Assessment (RRSA): Survey for Organizations

Arizona Department of Economic Security Community Services Administration,
Refugee Resettlement Program (ADES-CSA/RRP) and
The University of Arizona, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA*)*

Name of organization:
Name/title of interviewee:
Name of the interviewer:
Name of recorder:
Date of interview:

Throughout the interview, the interviewer will ascertain how refugees obtain information about childcare, training and transportation (i.e., through word of mouth, refugee servicing agencies, printed materials, etc.). Notes to interviewers are provided in italics in this survey.

I. GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION'S CLIENTS

1. a. What services does your organization provide for refugees?
   b. What is your organization's current focus?
   c. How long have you been providing these services, and has the focus changed from the past?

The following question aims to establish number of open vs closed cases. How does the agency account for its refugee cases (or cases of those with asylum status), and what terminology is being used?

2. a. How many refugees are currently being served by your agency?
   b. How many refugee cases have you dealt with in the last seven years?

The following question aims to solicit household or family data. For the purpose of this study, household/family is being defined as a group of people living and eating meals together.

3. a. How many households or family units are there?
   b. Can you break this down by types of households (two-parent families, single parents, individuals living together?).

For the following questions, focus on information pertaining to those currently being served.

4. What are the refugees' countries of origin? What are the ethnic groups that predominate (proportionally)?

5. Demand for services may vary by age and gender, so we have separated individuals into age groups. Can you provide such refugee population data, either by number of individuals or proportionally?

   0 – 5: _____
   6 – 16: females: _____ males:
   17- 65: females: _____ males:
   65 +:_____

6. a. How many, or what proportion of refugees, are employed (whether formally or informally)?
   b. Can you break this down by gender? men _____ women _____

II. QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILDCARE

A. Part One: Current Practices

7. Of the refugee families you are currently serving, how many, or what proportion, do you estimate have children of childcare age? How many children might that be?

8. Do you provide assistance for childcare services?
Interviewers explore any linked assistance, such as financial or transportation support.

9. How many, or what proportion, of refugee families need support with childcare? What sort of services or arrangements do they use? *Interviewers allow individuals to respond freely and then prompt the following types of services/arrangements that exist. Refer to Sylvie's notes to describe these different types, which are applicable to different age groups:*

    a. non-paid childcare arrangements
    b. paid informal childcare arrangements
    c. formal community-based paid childcare
    d. private childcare centers
    e. commercial babysitters or long-term nannies
    f. before and after-school childcare programs
    g. private pre-school programs

10. What do you perceive to be primary constraints limiting refugee families' access to childcare services?
Prompt with the following possible areas: cost, trust, times, meals, health, language.

11. What do you think refugee families consider as the most essential features of childcare arrangements?

B. Part Two: Future Childcare Provision

12. How could childcare services be made more accessible or useful to refugee families?

13. a. If there was an refugee program offering childcare subsidies, how many families with children, or what proportion, would take advantage of this?
    b. Do you have any specific insights with respect to such an option?

14. a. If there was a refugee program offering a childcare center for refugees, how many families with children (or estimated proportion) would take advantage of this?
    b. Do you have any specific insights with respect to such an option?

15. If you think there would be interest in a refugee childcare center, where would it be best located?
    a. within 3 miles of refugees' homes? _____
    b. on a major bus route? _____
    c. near work? _____
    d. other? _____

16. Could you elaborate on whether you think the above options are satisfactory, or give examples of better or other ways of providing childcare services, and how these programs might work?

III. QUESTIONS ABOUT TRAINING

A. Training Assistance *(Start by introducing our broad definition of training for this study -- which includes a full range of training opportunities, such as life-skills training, job-training, English classes, higher education, among others.)*

17. a. What kinds of non-vocational training (*e.g. life-skills, driving, parenting, banking system, etc.*) are currently offered to your refugee clients?
    b. What kinds of vocational training, or job training (*e.g. electrician, cosmetology, nursing*) are currently offered to your refugee clients?
    c. What kind of ESL training is currently offered to your refugee clients?

18. a. How many, or what proportion of refugees per year, undertake at least one training?
    b. Are there some patterns to your population with respect to who undertakes what kind training, and how extensive their involvement? (*by age, gender, ethnicity)*

19. What kinds of training (whether currently provided or not) is in most high demand among refugees? *(Explore how refugees ascertain what types of training would be most useful.)*

20. What are the primary constraints preventing refugees from undertaking training? *(These may have already been discussed, but if not, explore cost, time, and types of training offered.)*

21. a. Where is the best location to provide training (on the job, community college, refugee agency, vocational training facility, at home) and why?
    b. When should training be provided (time of day, days of week, length of training) and why?

22. a. Are the trainings (either your own, or those offered elsewhere) provided free, or is there a fee?
    b. If a program of subsidized tuition/books/supplies were offered, or if scholarships were available, would more refugees undertake training? If so, what proportion of refugees?

23. a. Does your agency follow-up to evaluate the impact of training programs on the ability of refugees to find work (vocational training), or better cope with life in the U.S. (non-vocational training)?
    b. Is there additional longer-term follow up conducted by your organization? (For instance, how long have refugees remained in their post- training employment? Are they satisfied with it?).

24. What would you estimate is the demand for higher education among the refugees you serve?

25. a. Is tuition assistance available for those wanting to secure college-level degrees?
    b. How many, or what proportion of refugees, take advantage of this?

26. If there was a subsidy program, how many, or what proportion of the refugees, would request assistance to secure college level degrees/certificates (AA, BA, MA)?

B. Re-credentialing / re-certification of certificates acquired prior to entering the U.S.

27. a. Some refugees arrive as professionals and/or poses solid technical skills or trade. Can you estimate how many, or what proportion of your refugee clients, have such credentials (diplomas, certificates) from their countries of origin?
    b. Can you estimate proportionally how many have professional skills (such as medicine, law) vs vocational or trade-focused skills (mechanics, cosmetology)?

28. Do refugees seek assistance with re-credentialing/re-certification?

29. a. In what subject areas do refugees seek assistance? (teaching, nursing, law)
    b. What proportion of refugees seek assistance for this?

30. Is financial assistance or other support available to help with re-credentialing/re-certification?

31. What constraints do refugees encounter in the re-credentialing/re-certification process?

32. What is your general impression as to what is most needed with respect to training? What would work best for the needs of refugees, and what major constraints do you foresee for training programs to work?

III. QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSPORTATION

33. What is the primary form of transportation utilized by refugees? How many, or what proportion of your refugee clients, either own or have access to a car?

34. What are their most frequent destinations?

35. What are the major problems experienced? *Explore limitations with public transport, lack of access to vehicle ownership, driver's training needs, getting a loan, credit issues, constraints to getting insured, and the process of registration at the DMV.*

36. If a vehicle purchase assistance program were available, how many, or what proportion of refugees would apply for it? (For instance, if they could receive up to $2,000 in assistance and would use the vehicle primarily for commuting to work.) *Explore how it could best work.*

37. If a vehicle repair assistance program was available (for safety maintenance e.g. replacement tires), how many, or what proportion of refugees, do you estimate would apply for this? *Explore how it could best work.*

38. a. Do you currently provide training information to refugees with respect to car purchasing, car ownership, car insurance or car maintenance?
    b. If yes, please describe.
    c. If not, do you perceive this as a need?
    d. Are there other ways for refugees to obtain such information?

V. QUESTIONS ABOUT REFUGEES IN THE COUNTY

<u>*General questions*</u>

39. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how many refugees (refugee status or asylees) currently live in the county?

40. a. How many 'households' are there?
    b. Can you break this down into types of households? (e.g. two-parent families, single parents, or individuals living together.)

41. Since the refugees' origins might be different from those that your organization serves, what do you think are the refugees' primary countries of origin in the county? And the ethnic groups that predominate?

42. Demand for services may vary by age and by gender. Can you provide us with refugee population data by age and gender (proportionally)?
    0 – 5: _____
    6 – 16: females: _____ males:
    17- 65: females: _____ males:
    65 +:_____

43. a. How many, or what proportion of refugees, would you estimate are employed in the county?
    b. Can you break this down by gender? men _____ women _____

Questions about childcare in the County

44. Of the total number of refugee families living in the county, what proportion would you estimate have children of childcare age? What proportion of those do you think would use childcare services?

45. What proportion do you think might be interested in using a refugee childcare center? A program offering childcare subsidies?

Questions about training in the County

46. Of the total number of refugees living in the county, what proportion do you think undertake vocational and non-vocational training?

47. If a program of subsidized tuition/books/supplies were offered, or if scholarships were available, what proportion of refugees living in the county do you think would undertake training?

Questions about transportation in the County

48. Of the total refugee population in the county, how many refugee households do you think would apply for vehicle purchase assistance if they could receive up to $2,000 in assistance and would use the vehicle primarily for commuting to work?

49. Of the total refugee population in the county, what proportion of refugees do you think would seek vehicle repair assistance if such a program (described above) were available?

VI. GENERAL QUESTIONS TO SOLICIT MORE IN-DEPTH FEEDBACK

50. If you could draw up a plan about the way in which such services should be provided to refugees, what would it look like that is different from what it is now?

51. Do you have concerns about structural/logistical constraints for such programs, or ideas about what might work best?

52. Do you have any suggestions about the ways in which different agencies might be able to work better together?

ATTACHMENT I - B

Rapid Refugee Services Assessment (RRSA): Topical Outline for Refugee Focus Group Discussions

Arizona Department of Economic Security Community Services Administration, Refugee Resettlement Program (ADES-CSA/RRP) and The University of Arizona, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (BARA)

Location of focus group:
Organization contact:
Group profile (gender, age, country of origin):
Name of facilitator:
Name of recorder:
Date/time of interview:

Note that the focus group participants should be guided to reflect on, and discuss, the following topics from two angles: a) their own individual experience; and, b) their perspective on how others within the refugee community (they are most familiar with) might respond (by giving percentage estimates, when possible.) Also, questions will solicit feedback on operational considerations pertaining to refugee services and support systems.

Throughout, the facilitators will also solicit information on the different ways refugees obtain information regarding childcare, training and transportation opportunities/services (such as via word of mouth, resettlement agency outreach, or through printed materials, etc.) The topical outline is meant only as a guide to the conversation, giving room for individual feedback on issues outside that which is included in the survey -- and thus, capturing a more comprehensive picture.

CHILDCARE

1. Current Practices: *Facilitators will guide the discussion around the following themes:*

a) What childcare arrangements refugees use and for what purpose (work, training):

Explore use of the following (refer to Sylvie's notes on the various types of childcare for further explanations and specifications with respect to different age groups and corresponding options):

- *non-paid childcare arrangments*
- *paid informal childcare arrangements*
- *formal community-based paid childcare*
- *private childcare centers*
- *commercial babysitter and long-term nannies*
- *private pre-school programs*
- *before and after-school childcare programs*

b) Frequency of use*: Facilitators, please remember to include questions with respect to summer childcare needs for school age children.*

c) Location*: How far from home (if outside the home environment).*

d) Cost: *Facilitators, please remember to include summer needs for school age children.*

e) Satisfaction/constraints with childcare arrangements: *Explore various possible constraints, such as financial, logistical, linguistic, cultural, transportation, and other considerations.*

2. Future Childcare Provision: *Facilitators, please explain that this is meant to explore the different ways that childcare support can best be provided, and guide discussion around the questions below.*

a) How can childcare services be made more accessible and useful? *Explore the following ideas -- subsidies, childcare centers, other possibilities.*

b) If there was a childcare subsidy program, how many individuals might utilize this service? *Explore what individual refugees think of this, how it might best work, and what the primary constraints might be.*

c) If there was a program offering a childcare center for refugees, what are the most important features it should have, and how many individuals would utilize it (estimated numbers or proportions)? *Explore what individual refugees think of this, and how it might best be run (such as being staffed by refugees, provision of culturally appropriate foods, hours/days of operation, constraints to be addressed.)*

d) Best location of a childcare center? *Explore ideas such as within 3 miles of home, on a major bus route, near work.*

TRAINING

Training Assistance

A. Current practices: *Facilitators, please guide discussion around the following themes and attempt to disaggregate responses by age/gender:*

a) What types of training are available, provided by whom, and at what cost? How many refugees undertake the training (men/women/ages)? *Explore both life-skills type training (driving, cooking, parenting); English training; job-training (vocational and non vocational); degree training either run by resettlement agencies, informal training, community colleges; and what corresponding subsidies/grants are already offered.*

b) What are the constraints to undertaking training? *Explore financial, logistical, linguistic, cultural, gender, and other considerations.*

c) Impacts of training? *Explore possible outcomes, such as improved ability to find work, or improved adjustment to life in the U.S., etc.*

d) Satisfaction? *Explore issues such as whether available vocational training is adequate and appropriate given the job market?*

B. Future training: *Facilitators, please explain that this section explores different ways training support could best be provided, and guide the discussion around the following:*

a) Most desired training? *Explore job-training, life skills, English training, degrees, and ask how the refugees know what types of training would be most useful?*

b) Best way of providing training? *Explore how, where, and when needs are best met for refugees, and via refugee agencies, community colleges, etc. Also ask about best time of day, days of week, length of training, location – and pros and cons of on the job, at community college, vocational training facility, own home, near home/work?*

c) If tuition/books/supplies were subsidized, what proportion of refugees would undertake training? *Explore vocational, non-vocational, or college level degrees/certificates (AA, BA, MA). Also explore how a subsidy program could best be provided.*

C. Re-credentialing / re-certification of certificates acquired prior entering the U.S.

Facilitators, please guide discussions around the following topics:

a) Number/proportion of people with credentials/certificates from country of origin? *Explore which subjects/country, and whether professional or vocational/trade certificates apply.*

b) Is there a need for assistance to re-certify? Is financial/logistical assistance currently available? *Explore limitations that may exist in the re-certification process, and what better support could be provided.*

TRANSPORTATION

Facilitators, please guide discussion around the following themes:

a) Main forms of transportation and use? *Explore public transport, ownership of car or other type of vehicle; destinations - how far/long from home (list); need for education/training about transportation.*

b) Need for, and constraints to, acquiring a vehicle*? Explore the following: financial, including cost of repairs/insurance; practical - learning to drive, or need for information about buying, insurance, maintenance; logistical – getting a loan, constraints to getting insured, getting documentation at motor vehicle dept.; linguistic and/or cultural considerations.*

c) If vehicle purchase assistance were available (such as $2,000/family for a vehicle primarily used for work), what proportion of refugees might apply? *Explore how it could best work.*

d) If vehicle repair/maintenance support were available, what proportion of refugees would apply? *Explore how it could best work*

ATTACHMENT I - C: RAPID REFUGEE SERVICES ASSESSMENT

MATRIX OF FINDINGS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Themes	**Name of Organization:** Name/title of interviewee: Name of interviewer:
GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION	
Demographics and other general information	
CHILDCARE	
A. Current practices	
B. Constraints limiting access to childcare	
C. Options for improved services	
D. Summary of themes and findings	
TRAINING	
A. Life-skills	
B. Job-training	
C. ESL	
D. Higher Education	
E. Re-credentialing	
F. Constraints to obtaining training	
G. Options for improving training provision	
H. Summary of findings	
TRANSPORTATION	
A. Current practices	
B. Major constraints	
C. Options for improved services	
D. Summary of findings	
FINAL QUESTIONS: service provision/cooperation	
Conclusions-interviewee perspective	
Interviewer observations	
Conclusions - facilitator's perspective	
Variability, i.e., ethnicity, age, gender	

ATTACHMENT I-D: RAPID REFUGEE SERVICES ASSESSMENT

MATRIX OF FINDINGS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Themes	Name of organization which organized focus group: Names of facilitators:
I. GENERAL INFORMATION	
Demographics, ethnicity, number of children, and other general information about participants	
II. CHILDCARE	
A. Current practices	
B. Constraints limiting access to childcare	
C. Options for improved services	
D. Summary of themes and findings	
III. TRAINING	
A. Life-skills	
B. Job-training	
C. ESL	
D. Higher education	
E. Re-credentialing	
F. Constraints to obtaining training	
G. Options for improving training provision	
H. Summary of themes and findings	
IV. TRANSPORTATION	
A. Current practices	
B. Major constraints	
C. Options for improved services	
D. Summary of themes and findings	
V. CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS	
Conclusions - focus group perspective	
Interviewer observations	
Conclusions - facilitator's perspective	
Variability: ethnicity, age, gender	