

Trip Reports
IRC Resettlement and International Programs Pilot Project
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Overview

Several community-based organizations with origins in select countries were identified as potential candidates for a small-scale pilot project that will link them with three IRC overseas country offices. Through two full semesters of data collection in 2005 and 2006, New School consultants identified, surveyed and assessed an extensive listing of refugee-run organizations. U.S.-based organizations that serve refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and South Sudan were identified as potential candidates for a visit to the IRC country office to share cultural information, explore potential local partnerships and share best organizational and programmatic practices. The Congolese Women's Association of New England (CWANE), Nah We Yone, the African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA), Southern Sudanese Organization (SSO), and Action for Self Reliance Association (ASERELA) are the community-based organizations (CBOs) identified as potential candidates for this pilot project. During the Fall 2006 semester, the New School consultants were responsible for conducting secondary organizational assessments of U.S.-based refugee community-based organizations, involving a site visit of each identified CBO.

Current New School consultants Kim Hafner and Danielle Rosario-Mullen, conducted secondary organizational assessments of Nah We Yone, SSO, ASERELA and ACANA, serving resettled refugees from Sierra Leone, Southern Sudan and Liberia, respectively. The two main objectives of the secondary organizational assessments were: to explore what the CBO would like to gain from a home country visit as well as what they would like to contribute through such a visit; and, to explore the CBOs' domestic services and compare them with the previous semester's organizational assessments.

Overall Impressions

Student consultants received the best overall impression from ACANA. This organization has the most well-developed staff and board as well as a growing budget. The Executive Director, Voffee Jabateh, is very proud of the accomplishments and growth ACANA has made in the seven years of its existence. Mr. Jabateh and other ACANA staff and volunteers have remained committed to the organization's mission since its founding and are enthusiastic about its future. Due to the successful programs and social services ACANA provides to African and Haitian refugees, asylees and immigrants in the Philadelphia area, it has developed a reputation of credibility and professionalism. Mr. Jabateh and other colleagues have also developed such a reputation in Liberia, and ACANA is in the process of establishing adult and youth programs in Liberia as well. Consultants agree that these multiple components make it an excellent organization to develop networks overseas and support efforts in Liberia.

Consultants were equally impressed by ASERELA and SSO. Robert Oryem, Director of ASERELA, was enthusiastic about the pilot project and was the only CBO representative that agreed to the consultant's visit after the first phone contact. Mr. Oryem was passionate about ASERELA's accomplishments and spoke wholeheartedly of future projects. He strongly believes that ASERELA has much to gain from a home country visit, particularly with regards to understanding what is most needed on the ground. In addition, Mr. Oryem shared with the consultants many ideas on what ASERELA could contribute to organizations that are in

Southern Sudan. Consultants believe that ASERELA would be an excellent CBO to involve in IRC's pilot project.

Consultants also received a good impression from SSO. Although arranging for a site visit was difficult, as initially director James Modi was not sure if he could meet, the organizational assessment went well. Mr. Modi and his colleague Lual Mayum met with the consultants and expressed much interest in the pilot project. They shared a plethora of ideas on how SSO can contribute to Southern Sudan through links with organizations in the country. It was quite apparent that Mr. Modi and Mr. Mayum had been brainstorming ways their organization could assist efforts in their home country for some time and participation in the pilot project can help them realize these goals. Equally notable was that Mr. Modi looked beyond the current situation, realizing that eventually the civil war in Sudan will end. A peace accord was signed recently and while there is uncertainty about whether it will be upheld, it causes Mr. Modi to think creatively of next steps, when the focus will no longer be refugees in the United States, but Sudanese citizens back in the home country. He detailed his vision of how SSO could change and serve a new population. He was the only director who had such foresight, which was impressive. Consultants agree that the domestic progress of SSO along with the knowledge and enthusiasm shared on ways SSO can contribute to organizations in Southern Sudan make SSO an excellent CBO for the pilot project.

However, consultants were unimpressed by Nah We Yone and in fact, were disappointed after having met with the director, Judy Rogers. Ms. Rogers seemed dispassionate about Nah We Yone and lacked confidence in it as a long-standing organization. She was more interested in how the IRC and other organizations could help Nah We Yone as opposed to how Nah We Yone could contribute to organizational efforts in Sierra Leone. Ms. Rogers, unlike ASERELA and SSO, lacked any ideas on how Nah We Yone could contribute to efforts in Sierra Leone. Although when asked directly if she was interested in having Nah We Yone involved in the pilot project she stated yes, overall, she seemed detached from the project's objectives and goals.

While CWANE was a targeted organization, the President, Julie Kibundila Kabukanyi, was traveling for three months out of state during the interview period. She recommended that consultants speak with the organization's Secretary, Francine Tshiwala Mudymba, who said that activities had been on a standstill since the last semester due to lack of funding. It was agreed with Vanessa Ortiz that CWANE's investigation and possible participation would be put on hold until next semester.

Nah We Yone Trip Report: Site Visit 10/31/06

On Tuesday Oct. 31, 2006, consultants met with Ms. Judy Rogers, Director of Nah We Yone, to discuss possible involvement in the IRC's Resettlement and International Programs Pilot Project. The meeting took place Nah We Yone's current office located in the basement of St. Philip's Church at 204 West 134th Street in New York City. Ms. Rogers explained that the current office is only temporary and that the organization is seeking a larger space, preferably in Harlem, where they are now located due to the fact that they can be easily reached from the other boroughs. St. Philip's church has permitted Nah We Yone to use the church's basement for its offices for only another month. The office consisted of two rooms, locked by key, with minimal lighting. However, as of December 12, 2006, Ms. Rogers informed consultants that the organization has moved out of their temporary location to an office space in the Bronx.

Consultants are not optimistic on the organization's contribution through its involvement in the pilot project. Ms. Rogers explained that Nah We Yone is experiencing extreme financial

difficulty and is currently “just trying to survive.” Leslie Rickford, Program Coordinator, who last semester’s consultants interviewed, had been let go, and currently Ms. Rogers was the organization’s only paid staff. As such, Ms. Rogers gave consultants the impression that she was only interested in activities and collaborations that could financially benefit Nah We Yone. She had misunderstood the scope of the pilot project and thought that it was how IRC could benefit from an overseas collaboration. Although Ms. Rogers did outwardly state that she was interested in forming international collaborations it seems that she is only interested in doing so once Nah We Yone is in a financially stable situation. Overall, the consultants were disenchanted by the lack of hope and enthusiasm expressed by Ms. Rogers. A glimmer of hope in an otherwise uninspired meeting was that Nah We Yone had created a coalition with a few other African-oriented refugee organizations. They hope to share resources and information with each other, which may provide strength to the struggling organization. On another positive note, Nah We Yone has increased their fundraising efforts and Ms. Rogers invited consultants to a concert taking place on December 16, 2006.

Based on the assessment that last semester’s consultants performed, consultants identified that fundraising (in the form of diversification of funders), administrative technical support (in the form of developing annual budgets, strengthening human resource management and policies establishing collaborations and coalitions, creating evaluation systems and strengthening civic engagement and advocacy portions of their work), board development (the development of an advisory committee and recruiting of a CPA board member to assist in some of the financial and budgetary reporting), programmatic (in the form of planning and strategizing, including the development of an annual plan and strategic plan every 3-5 years, information on housing for refugees, and information about organizations doing similar work (legal services available, programs focused on asylees, and information on potential speakers who are experts on certain subjects) were areas of challenge for Nah We Yone. Consultants used SOAR’s resource archive and shared information pertaining to the abovementioned topics with Ms. Rogers.

Follow up on assessment from Spring 2006

Consultants asked the following questions and gathered the following answers with regards to the follow-up from the previous semester’s organizational assessment of Nah We Yone.

1. You were looking for additional office space. Have you found a new place? Are you still looking to expand? *They are still looking for a new office space and have applied to “New Millenium” for a guest office; however, Ms. Rogers did not seem hopeful that their application would be accepted. In addition, Abyssinian Baptist Church had offered to assist them in finding new space. They were also waiting to hear back from them. (see paragraph above for update on status of new office space)*
2. You mentioned in the last assessment that you were seeking to diversify funding sources. Can you update us on the progress of this? *Ms. Rogers had mentioned a few proposals that were in the works, but were waiting to hear back about. However, she admitted that because of the financial situation they are pretty much in the same place as before with regards to fundraising.*
3. As noted in the spring’s assessment, we would like to have a list of your current board members and their affiliations. Could you provide us with a list? Is the work of your organization

still conducted by two part-time, two full-time, and two interns? *Currently there are no full-time staff, two interns, and Ms. Rogers who is both part-time and volunteer. Unfortunately, the organization had to lay-off Leslie Rickford, Program Coordinator, who was also the person they were hoping to send as a representative if chosen for the pilot project.*

4. Last year during the assessment the Executive Director had just starting working. How have her first few months been? *This actually was Judy Rogers. The assessment from last semester incorrectly identified her as new although she was one of the founding members of the organization.*

5. How many people benefit from your services? *75-100 active clients benefit from Nah We Yone's social services per year.*

6. Is it still a diverse African population that is served? Do you know the regional breakdown and ethnic breakdown? *Yes, while Nah We Yone started as a Sierra Leonean-based organization, they have always provided services to a diverse population mostly comprised of Sub-Saharan Africans with an emphasis on West Africans and East Africans. They do serve some African-Americans as well (mainly through their camp)*

7. You have partnerships with high profile human rights NGOs such as WITNESS, Human Rights First, African Services Committee and the Sierra Leone War Trust. Have you marketed those partnerships? In what capacity do you partner with these organizations? *Their collaboration with WITNESS has been inactive for a couple of years. Their partnerships with the other organizations are mainly based on referrals. Currently, Nah We Yone is at the infancy stages of forming a coalition of African services. They have partnered with four organizations that provide social services to the African community in the New York City area and New York foundation is assisting them with the technical assistance.*

8. Do you still maintain partnerships with Harlem Hospital, Bellevue and the NYU Program for Survivors of Torture? *Yes, particularly with Bellevue. Ms. Rogers pointed out that their relationship with Bellevue has been longstanding as their first referrals came from Bellevue.*

9. At the time of the last assessment, you mentioned that Nah We Yone did not have any linkages or collaborations in with organizations in Sierra Leone, does this still hold true? Do you have any plans to create any linkages? *This is still true mainly due to a lack of funds.*

10. Do you know of any organizations in Sierra Leone that you would like to collaborate with? *No, Ms. Rogers would like to think over this question.*

11. You have collaborated before with the IRC in Sierra Leone, assisting Sierra Leoneans who needed to contact their families. Was it a good experience? Would you like to collaborate with them again? Do you think that a partnership could work? *The collaboration with the IRC has ended as it was only during the war in Sierra Leone.*

12. Nah We Yone Family program. – Is it still ongoing? *When consultants asked about this, Judy Rogers spoke in great detail about the summer camp program, which seems to be their biggest draw. They are having a tremendous amount of success with the three day camp; this year the music group “Black Eyed Peas” donated \$10,000 to the camp.*

13. We noticed that the website is not up-to-date with information. Are there any plans to do this? Is this a regular project? Do you have an outside organization responsible for the website? How often does it get updated? *Consultants forgot to ask these questions during the interview, but when consultants visited the website in December, 2006 it was apparent that it had been updated.*

14. Do you still have the yearly gift drive where needed medical supplies and toiletries are sent to refugee camps and orphanages in Africa? *This gift drive has been inactive for a couple of years.*

15. Are there any new projects that you are currently working on or planning? *Most of the projects are on hold due to a lack of funds, however, there are a few plans for the near future: They have proposed to begin a youth development program beginning in January 2007; they are planning a partnership with Bronx International High School in order to provide cultural confidence services to the African population which is currently 10% of the student body.*

Questions regarding travel to home country

1. What would you hope to gain from a visit to Sierra Leone? *Ms. Rogers asked for more time to think about this question.*

2. If linkages were established, what would you like to contribute to Sierra Leone? *Ms. Rogers asked for more time to think about this question. However, consultants prodded for at least some idea on what the organization could contribute with some success. Ms. Rogers expressed that she would be interested in maintaining contact with detainees sent back home and connect them to services in Sierra Leone; to create linkages on women’s empowerment; and working with children and identity building, which is similar to the activities in their youth camp in Harlem.*

3. If you could choose two representatives from your organization, who would you send to go to Sierra Leone? Why these two? *Ms. Rogers was not sure and asked if the individual had to be from Sierra Leone or if he or she had to be an African refugee. Consultants were unsure of the ethnic qualifications of the representative and informed Ms. Rogers that they would get back to her on that.*

4. Do they have a valid passport to travel? (i.e. to go and come back) Can they meet these requirements? (Show list of medical and visa requirements for entry and exit) *Consultants provided Ms. Rogers with the necessary information for travel to Sierra Leone.*

5. Is there any time of the year that is off limits for travel due to religious holiday or special events within the organization? *In June Nah We Yone will be celebrating its 10 year anniversary and is planning on holding some events. July is when Nah We Yone holds its youth camp activities.*

ASERELA Trip Report: Site Visit 11/3/06

Consultants met with Robert Oryem, President of Action Self Reliance Association (ASERELA) on Friday, Nov. 3, 2006 in the organization's tiny and poorly lit office in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception's Guild Hall in Portland, Maine.

Consultants were very impressed with Robert Oryem and the work that ASERELA is doing. He excitedly told consultants about the organization's activities and events and although he did comment that fundraising is still an area where the organization struggles, he still managed to inspire confidence. He was very passionate about ASERELA and its work and was also very enthusiastic about the pilot project with IRC. Consultants left feeling very energized and motivated by all that he and the organization is accomplishing and would highly recommend that ASERELA participate in the pilot project.

Based on the previous semester's assessment, consultants noted that the organization had weaknesses in the following areas: Fundraising (in the form of diversification of funding sources - to expand programs, pay for full time staff members) and Partnership building (in the form of building collaborations with local and international organizations). Consultants had consulted the SOAR technical assistance archives before making our trip and brought information with consultants to share with ASERELA.

Follow up on assessment from Spring 2006

Consultants asked the following questions and gathered the following answers with regards to the follow-up from the previous semester's organizational assessment.

1. You mentioned that you were interested in expanding your programs to Southern Sudan, but that due to the war it wasn't possible. Given that the war is ongoing, are those plans are still on hold? *Yes, however participation in the pilot project may help initiate these plans.*

2. You had also said that you would like to build another school. What is the status of this? *They are still very much interested in building another school but currently do not have the funds to do so. Mr. Oryem felt that a partnership with the IRC could assist in helping to raise money for the school. He had clearly thought this through as he had concrete figures about how much they would need to do this (\$50,000 -\$100,000). It seemed that he thought that he could get this money from IRC, so consultants clarified that the pilot project would not be for that, but to establish linkages between ASERELA and home country CBOs.*

3. You mentioned that ASERELA's mission needed revision regarding U.S. programming. Has this been accomplished? *This has been accomplished but Mr. Oryem did not have a copy with him at the moment.*

3a. You needed to develop a strategic plan. Has this been accomplished yet? *ASERELA is still working on this.*

4. Are you still holding fundraising events? What kinds? What programs are the funds going to? *They mainly get their funding through events run and managed by volunteers. They have an annual dinner/cultural show in March in which they raise between \$9,000-\$13,000 from ticket sales; all of the money is sent to the school in the Uganda refugee camp. The money is used to pay the nine teachers, one janitor, and two cooks and to buy uniforms for the students; the school recently expanded from kindergarten to K-5th grade. They have recently added a Christmas concert which will take place at the end of December to raise additional funds.*

In addition, Mr. Oryem showed consultants 15 boxes of school supplies gathered by a community church that were going to be shipped to the school in the refugee camp in Uganda.

5. Are there any plans to update the website? We found some difficulty navigating through the site. *They are in the process of working on this. The person that was willing to assist them with this endeavor was no longer available. Mr. Oryem thought that the information consultants provided him on web design would be very helpful.*

6. You had said that a priority was to diversify sources for fundraising. Has any progress been made in this area? *Fundraising is still an area of weakness, although Mr. Oryem was very knowledgeable about what ASERELA needed to do in order to raise funds. As mentioned above in #4, ASERELA gets most of their funding through events in the community. In the 11 years that ASERELA has been in operation, the organization seems to have developed a familiar and respected place in the community. Mr. Oryem had showed consultants the program from one of the events and there was clear support from local businesses that had either donated in-kind gifts or funds to the events. [(churches, schools- University of Maine and other universities, Hannaford's (a supermarket chain).] It seemed like they could rely on them. Mr. Oryem understood quite well the importance of these sorts of partnerships.*

7. At one point, you had funding for youth programs, but funding ran out. Has there been a change in this? *No. They still do not have funds for formal youth programs, but the youth soccer program continues informally.*

8. Have you created any partnerships with any U.S. organizations doing similar activities? *Mr. Oryem mentioned having worked with Youth Build International, The United Church of Christ, the University of South Maine and Portland High School, however, their work together has not officially been identified as a partnership.*

9. Your director at the time, Robert Oryem, was planning to go to Sudan to find work because his position here was strictly voluntary. What is his status? Have any paid positions been added

to your staff? Does all work still rely on volunteers? *This opportunity did not work out. He remains to be the president of ASERELA on a volunteer basis and remains enthusiastic about the work being done.*

ASERELA has 14 staff members (mainly in the school in Uganda – teachers, 2 secretaries, 2 cooks, 1 janitor and 9 teachers). In the U.S. there is no paid staff although usually 30 or more community members contribute their time every now and then.

10. Can you provide us with a list of your board - are they still all staff members? *He did not have a list of board members but said that there are 10 individuals (Americans, non-Sudanese Africans and Sudanese) and that serve in this capacity.*

11. How many people benefit from your legal services? *There is no legal program per se, but they make many referrals and assist newly arrived refugees with navigating the system (where the immigration offices are, providing translation and interpretation). He could not provide a specific number of people that they served in this capacity, but indicated that it was a large number.*

Questions about home country travel

1. What would you hope to gain from a visit to Southern Sudan? *Mr. Oryem was very positive about the possibility of linking with the IRC and thought it should be a formal endeavor where a MOU would be signed establishing the partnership. He knew the IRC's reputation was strong and could be used to leverage money. He focused on the idea of building another school and thought that establishing partnerships with community-based organizations in Southern Sudan could assist in doing this.*

2. If linkages were established, what would you like to contribute to Sudan? *He focused on the damage that the 21-year war in Sudan had taken on his country, including on the infrastructure. He emphasized that there were not enough schools and that too was a priority. He thought that given his experience in the United States working with ASERELA the CBOs in Sudan could benefit from his knowledge of what he has learned about project management, how things are done in the United States, in particular transparency and honesty and openness with funders (for example, knowing that you have to do what you said you were going to with the money you raised and cannot change the scope of the project mid-way). He wants to provide technical support to the organizations abroad (he thought that this could be a mutually beneficial relationship and an exchange of ideas and knowledge).*

3. If you could choose two representatives from your organization to send to Southern Sudan, who would you choose? Why these two? *He nominated himself as the representative to send to Sudan.*

4. Do they have a valid passport to travel? (i.e. to go and come back) Can they meet these requirements? (Show list of medical and visa requirements for entry and exit) *Consultants gave him the visa requirement information.*

5. Is there any time of the year that is off limits for travel due to religious holiday or special events within the organization? *At the end of March ASERELA usually holds their annual fundraising dinner and in December their holiday event.*

Southern Sudanese Organization Trip Report: Site Visit: 10/4/06

Consultants met with James Modi, Director of SSO and Lual Mayum, Social Worker on Saturday, Nov. 4, 2006 in the offices that SSO shares with the other organizations in the Massachusetts Coalition in Lynn, Massachusetts.

James Modi and SSO inspired confidence in consultants as he was well informed about his organization and all that they were accomplishing. Particularly inspiring was that he had given much thought to how the organization was going to have to change with the signing of the peace agreement in Sudan. As services for refugees can only be provided for five years once the instability in the home country is over, he realizes that SSO will have to adapt and focus more on what is needed in Sudan. Consultants were highly impressed and would recommend that they be part of the pilot project.

Based on the previous semester's assessment, consultants noted that the organization had weaknesses in the following areas: Fundraising (in the form of information on diversification of funders and fundraising in general), Assistance in broadening of mission to include international organizations (this is if they decide to do that – hasn't been decided), and Assistance in partnerships and collaborations. Consultants had consulted the SOAR technical assistance archives before making our trip and brought information with consultants to share with ASERELA.

Follow up on assessment from Spring 2006

Consultants asked the following questions and gathered the following answers with regards to the follow-up from the previous semester's organizational assessment of SSO:

1. Are you still a member of the Coalition, sharing resources such as administrative help and referrals to shared programs? *Yes and a new Congolese organization has recently joined and shares the space with them. Because of their experience with coalitions, consultants asked if they would be willing to provide advice to Nah We Yone, who is currently forming a new African coalition. Consultants will put them in contact.*

2. Do you still have a preventative health program? Could you provide information on this? *Yes. The program is multi-faceted and Mr. Modi provided information in detail: Medical/health information - Education on the U.S. health system (including insurance (Mass Health - the state funded insurance program)-assistance in filling out forms, bringing people to clinics for their appointments); Health education of communities in the form of workshops (especially vaccines for children and adults – making adults aware that they need their children to be vaccinated in order to go to school here); TB treatment; HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted disease issues (assessment of the level of infection of the community, education on prevention, screenings); Education of medical professionals (nurses and doctors are made aware of the cultural issues with the community that may arise (i.e. lack of knowledge of U.S. health care system, gender issues (i.e. women not being as forthcoming with male gynecologists, etc.), which hopefully will enable them to be able to better serve the Southern Sudanese communities); basic self care health information (nutrition and diet to prevent high blood pressure, cholesterol, etc, benefits of exercise). Licensed interpreters;*

3. You had received funding for your Community Life program but it ended. Is this program still not running? *They were able to re-launch the program but it has changed from a social services program to providing capacity building for novice organizations, i.e. providing consultants to work in them. They also received more funding to assist individuals prepare for the citizens exam, including ESL.*
4. Is the Executive Director still part-time? *Mr. Modi is technically part-time and is paid for 20 hours a week, but said he works about 50 hours per week.*
5. You had mentioned to the previous consultants that there were efforts to recruit new board members, focusing on women and non-Sudanese individuals. What is the status of that? *Recruitment still continues in order to diversify the board. Mr. Modi felt that the search for viable board members should be completed within two to three months.*
6. How many individuals have been served by the services of SSO from the onset? (this information was not filled in) *Over the past three years he estimated that 1000+ individuals had benefited from the services that SSO provides.*
7. Do you still have no plans to develop international linkages? *While SSO's mission and funding only allows them to work with resettled refugees in the U.S., the Organization realizes the importance of working on the ground in Sudan to keep abreast of what is happening there. As mentioned above in the introduction, they already have thought ahead and realize that eventually, when refugees stop coming and start returning to Sudan – Mr. Modi feels this could possibly start soon as a peace agreement has been signed (however he acknowledged that there is no guarantee that it will be respected) - they will have to shift their focus abroad. Mr. Modi is very interested in the pilot project and is eager to make linkages in Sudan.*
8. Sudan Education Fund – have any more students benefited from this? *Yes. This fund provides \$1,000 to Sudanese individuals for tuition for any type of education. The fund was originally set up to help the Lost Boys, but SSO was integral in expanding the target population to encompass the entire community. Mr. Modi commented that he could confidently say that the entire community in Lynn had benefited from this fund. The community had used it for college tuition, driving school (to become licensed truck drivers), training for certified nursing assistants and other types of technical school training. SSO assists individuals with the application process, filling out the forms and providing letters of support, especially for those without proper documentation (due to the 21-year civil war).*
9. You said that you were trying to initiate a partnership with North Shore Community College. Has this been launched? *Yes. Mr. Modi was recently asked to join the Board of Directors of the College and SSO has received funding to start a project with the College to prepare youth for college. SSO has workshops with the purpose of showing youth how they can be useful and productive members of society. Mr. Modi explained that the program also serves to get youth out of the streets (all youth, not specifically Sudanese).*
10. A possibility to overcome the issue of weather and farming in Maine was to establish some greenhouses in which Sudanese could work was discussed. Has any more thought been put to this? *Yes. They are working with the Office of Refugees and Immigration on this project. In order to create self-sustainability, land and farming implements are being given for free to individuals interested in farming. A three-month training program has been established as well. Although there has been great interest in this program, the land is located about 90 minutes*

away from Lynn, Massachusetts. People have been reluctant to relocate away from the established Sudanese community and their families. SSO continues to support and push this program and hopes that people will take advantage of it.

Questions about home country travel

1. What would you hope to gain from a visit to Southern Sudan? 2. If linkages were established, what would you like to contribute to Sudan? *Mr. Modi expressed great interest in SSO participating in the partnership program with IRC because he knows that it is important that SSO keep informed of what is happening on the ground in Sudan. He detailed a list of the pertinent issues to be addressed here and in Sudan: Medical/health issues: vaccinations and other health issues, HIV/AIDS (education about and prevention of), ethnic-based health education.*

Education: The 21-year civil war has created huge gaps in education; there is therefore a great need for building schools in Sudan. Child soldiers who have seen too much killing, trauma, torture and death require counseling services and need to be brought into mainstream society. In addition they have missed out on basic education and will have to make up what they have lost. Adult literacy (both in Sudan and in the U.S) and life education (as many have only known war in their lives) are needed as well.

Barriers in society: Culturally, Sudanese girls have been suppressed, not encouraged to go to school and to get ahead. There needs to be a parting with tradition with regards to these gender issues. Education of both men and women, old and young needs to occur in order to promote this change.

Agriculture: Many refugees will return from refugee camps, where food was always provided for them. Self-sufficiency will need to be encouraged (identification of viable crops to be planted, training on how to plant crops selected, provision of tools and other farming implements.)

Mr. Modi also indicated that it will be important to identify possible organizations to work with in Sudan. There might be duplication of services, so a shift of mission/goals might have to occur. He emphasized the importance of collaborating with local organizations to determine community needs. One can only contemplate (as he did above) what types of needs exist in the communities, but a complete needs assessment will have to be performed.

After the needs assessment is performed, local authorities will have to be engaged, as nothing will be able to be accomplished without their strong support.

Mr. Modi speculated that SSO might want to establish a branch in Sudan.

On Sunday (Nov. 5, 2006 – the day after our meeting) a colleague from SSO was traveling to Sudan to set up a school with funds he had raised. Mr. Modi acknowledged that these sorts of projects are ones that SSO would like to continue in the future.

3. If you could choose two representatives from your organization to send to Southern Sudan, whom would you choose? Why these two? *Mr. Modi did not select individuals, but said that*

there are many qualified members of the community (Sudanese nationals with U.S. residency members) that could go (including himself).

4. Do they have a valid passport to travel? (i.e. to go and come back) Can they meet the medical and visa requirements?

Consultants gave him information on requirements needed in order to obtain a Sudanese visa.

African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA) Trip Report: Site Visit: 12/2/06

Consultants met with Mr. Voffee Jabateh, Executive Director; Dr. Alieu Seisay, Program Director of the Refugee, Asylee and Immigrant Services; and Ms. Sarian Jabateh, Director, Financial Management, Control and Reporting during a two-day Burmese Community Workshop on Dec. 2-3, 2006 in Baltimore, Maryland. The workshop was held by the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) in collaboration with the IRC to provide newly developing Burmese CBOs with the information necessary for establishing a non-profit organization in the U.S. Mr. Jabateh, Dr. Seisay and Ms. Jabateh attended the workshop to share their first-hand experiences in establishing, and continuing to develop, ACANA. The two-day workshop was also an opportunity for consultants to conduct a secondary organizational assessment of ACANA.

Consultants were encouraged by the enthusiasm that both Mr. Jabateh and Dr. Seisay (Ms. Jabateh did not participate as much in our interview) expressed when discussing the many achievements of ACANA and the work they do with refugees, asylees and immigrants. Mr. Jabateh and Dr. Seisay were eager to discuss the many successful programs that ACANA has implemented and future prospects if given the opportunity to participate in the pilot project. When discussing the establishment and development of ACANA, consultants were pleased to hear about the employees and volunteers that have remained committed to ACANA and its mission since its founding in 1999. In addition, Mr. Jabateh has won many awards for his and ACANA's efforts. Both Mr. Jabateh and ACANA have developed a reputation of credibility and professionalism by the development of programs that are successfully reaching its target community. All of these accomplishments make ACANA an ideal organization to develop networks overseas and support efforts in Liberia.

Follow up on assessment from Spring 2006

Consultants asked the following questions and gathered the following answers with regards to the follow-up from the previous semester's organizational assessment of ACANA:

1. You had mentioned to the previous consultants that the West African Teen Retrieval Program (WATREP), an after school program assisting 55 children of West African resettled refugees, was one of ACANA's most intensive programs. Is this still the case? How is the program coming along? How many children is the program serving to date? *Yes ACANA is still assisting 55 children. Out of these 55, 45-49 attend the program on a weekly basis. In addition, as part of the*

WATREP program, ACANA recently received a government contract from the City of Philadelphia to provide an Anti-Violence and Prevention Program to 50 children.

2. We are aware that you provide computer hardware training to youth. What is the duration of the training? How many youth have you trained to date? Has the training connected the youth to employment? *Mr. Jabateh explained that there are three layers to the computer training program:*

a. Community Assessment Program – This program provides basic computer literacy skills (i.e. how to use a mouse, etc.). Classes are on a three-month cycle and 30-40 people participate per year with a 60-person cap.

b. Hardware Computer Training Youth Program – This involves a six-month training program with 12 participants per class. Approximately 30-40% of the students in this program have gone on to choose computers as an area of concentration on an advanced level. There is a low job placement percentage in this area due to the fact that the training is offered to youth who often continue with their education and not adults.

c. Parent Computer Skills Training Program – This training is offered to parents, providing them with the necessary skills to assist their children with homework assignments. 60 parents per year benefit from this training.

3. Do you still support your programs through state and national government contracts? Have you added any additional support, either through community events, volunteers, or any other outside support? *Yes. All grants are still in place since last semester's assessment. The grant for the Anti Violence and Prevention Program is new. There is a new grant to provide Breast Cancer Awareness that is forthcoming. Events do not raise a large amount of money; however, ACANA's budget has doubled since the last assessment in Spring 2006 (from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000). Mr. Jabateh mentioned that the Breast Cancer Awareness program will be the last new program added to ACANA's roster of activities for now. He explained that the organization has decided to focus on improving and expanding their current programs instead of adding new programs.*

4. At the time of your previous assessment, you had six full-time paid staff, seven part-time paid staff, and three to four volunteers. Has any staff been added, either paid or volunteer? There was only one part-time employee in charge of fundraising. Has anyone else been added? *ACANA has added four full-time staff totaling ten; one part-time staff left the organization, but two new part-time staff joined, totaling at eight part-time staff; the organization has added two new volunteers, totaling at six volunteers on staff; six unpaid interns and three consultants have also been added.*

5. How many people benefit from the adult education services you provide? *The adult education services are year-long programs with 40-45 people benefiting per year. Overall approximately 2000 individuals per year benefit from ACANA's services combined. This number is not limited to Liberians however, as clients include individuals from many other African*

countries (Sierra Leone, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Mali, Ethiopia, etc.) as well as African-Americans.

6. At the time of the last assessment ACANA was working with the Marion Casuel Ministry and was registered as a local NGO in Liberia, however, no services were currently being offered. You were working on establishing adult education services and ESL in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Has any progress been made in these areas? *Now there is a larger committee within Marion Casuel Ministry with more resources. Although they had hoped to open a new school in Liberia by September 2006, this did not occur. The new committee decided to spend more time planning and coming up with a consolidated structured plan for the school. In addition, ACANA is planning to have an office space for its organization in Liberia by the time the pilot project trip to Liberia takes place.*

In addition, Mr. Jabateh stressed that a strong Liberian partnership with a non-profit organization in the United States is key for success in Liberia and feels that the additional partnership with IRC is also important, given its reputation worldwide and knows that IRC's involvement can open doors for success.

He also said that ACANA is looking beyond its borders and wants to not only develop Liberia, but Sierra Leone as well (as many refugees fled there during the war).

7. What are the relations with the board? *There is a good relationship between the board and ACANA's Executive Staff. Currently there are nine board members, all of which are full-time. Three are women and the remainder men; all of the members are of diverse cultural and professional backgrounds.*

Questions about home country travel

1. What would you hope to gain from a visit to Liberia? *Mr. Jabateh explained that ACANA's presence in Liberia would inspire confidence in its staff and community that ACANA is doing all that it can to help its community in Philadelphia as well as its home community in Liberia. He added that such a visit will provide an opportunity for the organization to meet with local staff in Liberia to plan future steps, and pinpoint what resources are most needed. He hoped that*

Mr. Jabateh felt that the pilot project between IRC and ACANA could be replicated as a model for other countries. Many people have been speaking about such collaboration, but IRC is the organization that actually undertook it.

2. If linkages were established, what ways do you see ACANA contributing to the development of Liberia?

Mr. Jabateh spoke of a new approach to education (21st Century Model) that he would like to bring to Liberia. He explained that students in Liberia do not have the same access to education and resources (such as computers) as those in the United States. He also added that this would involve introducing a "new way of thinking" to the education system.

Mr. Jabateh believes that organizations in Liberia would benefit more from collaboration with a strong non-profit organization in America, with a special interest in the progress of Liberia, such as ACANA, than they would if money was blindly pumped into the country. In addition, Mr. Jabateh stated that ACANA, by being an outside organization with no political ties, can make decisions in the efforts it brings to Liberia without being influenced by political strongholds.

3. If you could choose two representatives from your organization, who would you send to go to Liberia? Why these two?

Mr. Jabateh recommended himself and the consultant responsible for finance and auditing, Lawrence Yangalay, as ACANA representatives for travel to Liberia. He felt that they would complement each other's qualities and areas of expertise, thus making an excellent team. Mr. Jabateh believes that he himself has a reputation in Liberia for following through on ideas and plans and can easily mobilize support, both in the United States and in Liberia, due to his long time work and recognition in both countries. Lawrence is also a well respected figure in ACANA and is educated on the steps it takes to run a post war, non-profit organization in Liberia after being directly involved in the management of drug dispensary in post-war in Liberia.

4. Do they have a passport? Can they meet the medical and visa requirements? *As this was a last minute trip, consultants did not have the time to bring visa information with them, but have subsequently emailed it to Mr. Jabateh..*

Conclusion

ACANA, ASERELA and SSO have strong leaders committed to their organizations' missions. Each is enthusiastic about participating in the IRC's pilot project and feel that not only do they have much to bring to community-based organizations in their home countries but are also aware of the benefits they can gain through forming overseas partnerships and networks. It was obvious that all three directors had both given much thought to the pilot project and have many ideas about how to implement it.

In contrast, the director of Nah We Yone did not instill confidence in consultants about herself as a leader or about the accomplishments of the organization. It was disappointing that Ms. Rogers had not given much thought to the pilot project and could not offer any insight to how Nah We Yone could possibly participate in such collaboration.

On a positive note, Dr. Seisay of ACANA expressed interest in Nah We Yone as ACANA also works with Sierra Leoneans, so consultants provided him with their contact information. Perhaps collaborating with such a dynamic organization as ACANA will inspire Nah We Yone.

Consultants would strongly recommend that the two Southern Sudanese organizations (ASERELA and SSO) and the Liberian organization (ACANA) participate in the Pilot Project, but advise IRC to forego the involvement of the Sierra Leonean Organization (Nah We Yone).

Please note that CWANE has not been overruled entirely and as mentioned above, will be interviewed and vetted further during the next semester.