

Taking the Lead: Refugees Creating Their Own Solutions

**A Study of U.S. Refugee and Immigrant
Organizations, International Linkages and Exemplary
Leadership**

**New School, Graduate Program in International Affairs
Practicum in International Affairs Consultancy Project with
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
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I. INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Each year, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) provides support to many of the millions of people escaping conflict and persecution around the world and is a leader in both post-conflict development and refugee resettlement. Less publicly known, previously settled U.S.-based refugees and immigrants, in the form of Community Based Organizations (CBOs), also play an important role in facilitating refugee resettlement and assisting on-the-ground international development efforts. These CBOs create an irreplaceable support network for refugees navigating profound life changes, offering a wide range of services from emergency relief and re-construction in conflict areas and refugee camps, to language classes, legal assistance and post-trauma counseling for resettled refugees in the United States. In addition, these grassroots groups offer assistance directed to each community's unique circumstances and can do this because they developed from within the refugee/immigrant communities and share ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and common life experience. Therefore, these CBOs possess a unique capability to understand and foresee the needs of refugees and the home country in ways not necessarily possible for international relief organizations and mainstream social service providers.

The IRC and a three-person student team from the New School Graduate Program in International Affairs partnered to investigate the links and opportunities U.S.-based CBOs can offer both domestically and abroad. Research focused on six resettled refugee populations: Afghan, Burmese, Congolese, Liberian, Sierra Leonean and Southern Sudanese. The goals of this report are to: demonstrate findings on networks and collaborations that CBOs have developed to serve the selected populations; recommend strong grassroots organizations for a possible advisory committee made up of former refugee leaders; and provide information about effective refugee-led organizations for future collaboration with IRC.

Methodology

Over a three-month period in the spring of 2006, the New School team identified, researched and interviewed CBOs developed by and for members of the above immigrant populations. The investigation examined: program depth and breadth in the U.S., international linkages, organizational and leadership capacity; areas of need, and potential areas where grassroots expertise can strengthen or add to IRC programming. The research team found CBO subjects through web-based research, previous research conducted in 2005 by New School research consultants, and referrals from CBO leadership and staff. Findings are based on data collected through phone interviews, in-person organizational assessments, CBO-produced print and electronic materials and news reports about the CBOs.

Collaboration Recommendations

The IRC is exploring the idea of forming a refugee advisory committee to: generate dialogue and information sharing on community development programming; provide assistance in strengthening CBOs; bring the concerns of refugee communities to the broader international arena; and demonstrate IRC's commitment to capacity building and refugee leadership

development. Based on the phone interviews and organizational assessment visits, we recommend the following organizations as strong candidates for such a committee:

Afghan Communicator (AC) – Queens, New York – Founded 1997

AC is an information and resource center for Afghans and facilitates connections between the Afghan community and the larger community in the U.S. AC is a community based, grassroots organization dedicated to education, community development, youth leadership, advocacy, and art and culture. The main focus of AC is to promote Afghan art and culture, encouraging the younger generations to be active community participants by empowering them with knowledge and skills to link the Afghan community together.

- *Collaborations* – has strong connections with most U.S.-based Afghan CBOs and maintains an office in Kabul which helps distribute Western aid directly to charities of the donor's choice.
- *Refugee Expertise* – daily activities include providing immigration assistance and referrals.
- *Innovative Programming* – In 2004, started publishing Karyaba, a Kabul-based non-political, non-partisan, bi-weekly. It is the first classified publication available to assist U.S. based Afghans find employment in Afghanistan.

African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA) – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Founded 1999

ACANA is the only service provider in Pennsylvania established by African Immigrants with the mission to serve the African immigrant population in the state. ACANA provides after-school programs, refugee resettlement referrals, legal assistance, computer and technical training, trauma counseling for children, cultural fairs and support to African artists and musicians.

- *Collaborations* – not only partners with local health care providers for the trauma counseling and with local and state agencies for cultural programs, but it also has begun an education program in Liberia.
- *Refugee Experience* – provides job referrals, legal assistance, cultural orientation, health referrals, a food bank, and educational programs to Liberian and other African refugees in the community.
- *Innovative Programming* – is currently working to become the only 'one-stop' social service provider for African immigrants and refugees in need in the city of Philadelphia and its surroundings. In addition, it continues to cultivate its programs that support African artists and musicians and promotes African art and culture through cultural fairs, which include music and dance, and fashion shows.

Action for Self-Reliance Association (ASERELA) - Portland, Maine – Founded 1994

Founded by Southern Sudanese resettled refugees, ASERELA fosters self reliance and works to improve living conditions for Southern Sudanese refugees both in Portland, Maine and in the Kiryandongo Camp in Uganda.

- *Collaborations* – built and manages a K-6 school in Kiryandongo refugee camp, providing 400 children with education and nutrition to which they would otherwise have no access.
- *Refugee Expertise* – possesses experience with both U.S. and refugee camp-based Southern Sudanese refugees and tackles challenges like tribalism, inter-family conflict and community building.
- *Innovative Programming* – designed and implemented a youth leadership program to help young adults deal with the unique circumstances of transitioning to adulthood in the United States while also part of immigrant/refugee families; Since 1995 ASERELA has been organizing successful fundraising/awareness events in Portland, Maine to support the refugee camp school, bringing together both Southern Sudanese and wider Maine communities. ASERELA would be interested in teaching other refugee CBOs how to expand their resources through benefit events.

Congolese Women’s Association of New England (CWANE) – Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts – Founded 2003

Founded by and for Congolese women, CWANE provides women connections to: housing, daycare, employment, citizenship, education and health through individual referrals and public awareness conferences and workshops. While newer and therefore not as programmatically advanced than other U.S.-based Congolese CBOs, CWANE is unique because it prioritizes women’s needs and offers an example of women in leadership.

- *Collaboration/Linkages* – partners with mainstream social service providers and Congolese CBOs to produce public events and raise funds for women’s hospital in Congo
- *Refugee/Asylee Expertise* - first group to conduct focus groups throughout New England so women could identify their own needs; board members are from tribes representing a cross-section of Congolese population
- *Innovative Programming* – galvanizes Congolese community in large scale events to educate about areas of most concern to women and their families which are then replicated in workshops throughout New England.

Nah We Yone, Inc. – New York City, New York – Founded 1997

Nah We Yone was established to provide culturally responsive programs to the African diaspora through psychological and social support, education, wellness and recreation programs and crisis intervention for adults, children and families.

- *Collaborations* – partners with high profile human rights NGOs such as WITNESS, Human Rights First, African Services Committee, and the Sierra Leone War Trust.
- *Refugee Expertise* – provides support to refugees in detention centers, resources to individuals adjusting to the new environment, and provides housing, job and legal referrals, as well as advocacy for war victims.
- *Innovative Programming* – in addition to direct services and programs, concentrates on creating and providing a ”family” of support for the population it serves, such as monthly

educational meetings and yearly camps for youth. In this way, Nah We Yone has created a sustainable network where those that once received services now volunteer to support and strengthen their community.

Southern Sudanese Organization (SSO) – Lynn, Massachusetts – Founded 2002

The refugee founded SSO facilitates Southern Sudanese resettlement and adaptation and provides referral services including translation, citizenship, immigration, employment, education, health and youth programming.

- *Collaborations* – a member of the Massachusetts Mutual Assistance (MA) Coalition, an alliance of eleven immigrant/refugee groups, that produces support programs, seeks funding and connects to mainstream social service organizations.
- *Refugee Expertise* – a frequent partner to Volags such as the IRC Boston resettlement office and other refugee support agencies.
- *Innovative Programming –New Entry Sustainable Farming Project* - for refugees who lack skills necessary for urban/sub-urban employment but have substantial agricultural knowledge from their work in Sudan. The project is aimed at empowering refugees to use the skills they have to support themselves and their families. Participants will start as employees on a farm and SSO is working to invest in a small land holding so their community can work for themselves. (This project is being implemented in partnership with other groups from the MA Coalition).

II. U.S.-BASED CBOS AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

Since CBOs offer insight into communities' unique characteristics and needs, it is not necessarily useful to compare strengths and weakness between different immigrant populations. Yet this study revealed that certain trends and characteristics do transcend community and country boundaries and therefore warrant discussion before delving into respective CBO country of origin analyses.

Intuitively, one knows that community-based organizations generally develop to fulfill unmet community needs. In the case of CBOs investigated for this study, motivations for organizational formation can be divided into three categories:

- To serve U.S.-based populations (locally, regionally and nationally).
- To assist with development, reconstruction and social services in home countries and countries of first asylum.
- To advocate on behalf of their community and ensure information dissemination.

While the majority of these organizations say they were established to manage well-defined community issues, over the course of operations their programming typically underwent significant transition and expansion. Different factors spark such programmatic growth. From political and demographic changes in populations to constituents coming forth with new or unanticipated needs, CBOs often feel pressured to add and change programs. Although CBOs do not necessarily begin operations intending to handle the breadth of issues facing their constituents, they often suffer "mission creep," reactively taking on their communities' multi-faceted needs. This often pushes organizations to operate beyond their capacity.

For example, Afghan Communicator, which was founded and officially operates as an Afghan arts and culture organization, regularly handles social service needs because community members come to this reputable organization not knowing where else to turn. In the same vein, some CBOs who began as social service agencies with limited foci admitted that they had knowingly taken on new issues beyond what they could manage. Congolese Fondation Shalupe explained that they broadened their programs to tackle issues such as homelessness among asylum seekers or transportation accidents and violations because they decided needs like these had simply become too significant to ignore.

While many organizations overextend themselves, interviews revealed that an outside constraint, like funder involvement, limits groups' from operating reactively. James Mudaki, president of the Southern Sudanese Organization (SSO) in Lynn, Massachusetts, explained that their principle funder, government agency Organization for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI), monitors grantees' operations in terms of their approved missions and that even if SSO wanted to expand from refugee social services to, for example, cultural preservation or home country linkages, ORI would have to approve the change. While, of course, this factor certainly limits CBOs

incorporation of all areas in which constituents realistically need help, groups are also unlikely to threaten their operational viability by trying to solve more community needs than their capacity allows.

Across organizations interviewed, CBO leaders know that home-country and U.S.-based development hinges on a communities' access to educational and learning opportunities. Central to both U.S. and home-country programming, significant variation exists between educational programs, both between populations and within international and domestic endeavors. Home-country education projects typically focus on building and running schools, supporting disadvantaged youth by providing school fees and sponsoring university level education. Liberian and Sierra Leonean CBOs have a particularly strong emphasis on increasing educational opportunities in their home-countries. Groups like the Tappita District Development Association (TADDA) and the Organization for the Advancement of Literacy (OFAL) provide a wide range of support - from sponsoring school and library construction, to supporting on-going academic instruction and providing supplies and scholarships.

A number of CBOs choose to target refugee camp populations within countries of first asylum. Some Burmese CBOs offer U.S. funded scholarships for refugees in Thailand, the National Burma Action Committee of New York (NBACNY) supports exiled students living along the Burma/Thai border, and the Karen Emergency Relief Fund (KERF) funds Karen-Burmese refugees in Thailand to attend university. The Action for Self Reliance Association (ASERELA), a Sudanese CBO, built and now manages the operations of a K-6 grade school in the Ugandan Kiriandongo refugee camp, providing children with education they could not access through the Ugandan school system. Finally, the Liberian Mandingo Association of New York (LIMANY) provides scholarships and school supplies to children and IDPs in the camps in Guinea.

In the U.S., communities develop both adult and youth educational programming for refugee newcomers. Adult programs typically focus on English language proficiency and literacy with particular concern for populations previously lacking educational access within home-countries, like women from rural areas and marginalized ethnic groups. Learning needs across groups range from the educated who simply must learn English, to those possessing low-level education and rudimentary skills, to others who never received formal education or had exposure to written language. While refugees from English-speaking countries, like Liberia, Sudan and Sierra Leone appear to have an advantage over the non-English speakers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Burma, many refugees came from secluded areas where local languages dominated. To address this problem, organizations such as African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA) and OFAL have started adult education programs and vocational training both in Liberia or Sierra Leone as well as in the U.S.

CBO-sponsored youth initiatives typically complement public education with after school and tutoring programs geared to the specific immigrant populations' educational needs. ACANA, the United Nimba Citizens Council (UNICCO), and the Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island (LCARI) offer youth programs, either through after-school programs, providing cultural sensitivity training and conflict resolution within the school system, or by targeting programs and vocational training to at-risk youth. In addition, organizations like the Congolese

Women's Association for New England (CWANE) and American Society of Afghan Professionals (ASAP) offer public workshops, conferences and seminars to help parents negotiate and understand the American educational system.

Then there are funding constraints. "We have the vision and commitment, but we lack sufficient means," admitted Dignity Congo founder and president, Edgar Senga. His statement echoed sentiments shared by many CBO representatives from across the six countries investigated. Insufficient financial resources pose the biggest challenge to providing sustainable programs and threaten productivity and efficiency of overall organizational capability. While some organizations have resources for paid staff, very few of these CBOs have the financial capability. Burmese Relief Center (BRC-USA) directors Martha T. Zingo and Susan Klimist explain that they dream of collaborating with other Burmese CBOs but their dependence on over-extended volunteers to run BRC-USA, they cannot pursue such collaborations. In addition, groups often operate from "unofficial" offices, such as in leaders' homes or in donated community spaces like churches. Both of these factors foster informal operating environments, limiting professionalism and the ability to consistently provide service. Of course, not all CBOs interviewed operate with equal efficiency, capacity or innovation, nor can they fairly blame all difficulties on funding.

Passion and commitment drive these grassroots efforts throughout the six investigated populations, regardless of organization size, location, structure or issue area(s). These CBOs persevere through myriad struggles, such as minimal resources and constituents' significant problems. Yet leaderships' dedication to strengthening and helping their communities, in combination with an on-the-ground awareness of community needs, explains how these organizations manage to help in ways that other larger mainstream institutions cannot.

AFGHAN COMMUNITIES

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| Number of Organizations Researched: 22 |
| Number of Organizations Interviewed: 7 |
| Number of Organizations Visited: 2 |
| Afghan Communicator, Flushing, Queens, New York |
| American Society of Afghan Professionals (ASAP), Arlington, Virginia |

Conflict and U.S. Migration

Today, Afghans represent the world's largest single refugee group. More than 20 years of conflict, four consecutive years of drought, and a repressive Taliban regime unconcerned with economic development or other basic communal needs combined to produce the exodus of over six million people from Afghanistan between 1980 and 2001¹. Since 1980, the number of refugees receiving lawful permanent status in the United States has both sharply climbed and fallen, from 542 in 1981, to 22,946 in 1990 to 959 in 2004². By the end of 2004, a reported 2.1 million Afghan refugees live in 78 asylum countries, constituting 23 percent of the global refugee population. Yet, Afghans demonstrate a commitment to voluntary repatriation when possible; from 2001 – 2004 approximately Five million Afghans returned home, 3.5 million from Pakistan and Iran and one million Afghan refugees are likely to return home by 2006³. As of October 2005, UNHCR estimates that 153,400 people remain displaced in the country, most (78 percent) located in camps in southern Afghanistan.

Overview of Organizations Reached

An estimated 200,000 Afghans reside in America, 60,000 living in the California bay area. In response to the growing Afghan population, a number of CBOs have emerged. Most U.S.-based Afghan CBOs are devoted to two goals: strengthening their U.S.-based communities and collaborating with local and international NGOs supporting and rebuilding Afghanistan. As for groups focusing efforts on the U.S., CBOs primarily formed in order to help Afghans to better adjust and adapt to American society. For example, The American Society of Afghan Professionals (ASAP), founded in 2000 by Afghan-Americans in Alexandria, Virginia with sister chapters in Chicago, Illinois and Washington D.C., is a network of professionals committed to empowering U.S.-based Afghans by advocating for their concerns, sharing resources through peer networking, and organizing professional seminars and educational programs. In addition to providing immigration referrals and offering Farsi/Dari and Pashto translation services, ASAP fosters Afghan community involvement and activism by extending support nation-wide to other growing Afghan CBOs in cultural and social education, professional development and community outreach.

Afghan Communicator (AC), based in Flushing, New York, has been serving as a rich resource information center and a link between the Afghan community and the larger U.S. community since 1997. As a result of the September 11th attacks within the U.S., AC expanded its role and

¹ Migration Policy Institute, 2003

² 2004 Yearbook of immigration statistics, US department of Homeland security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2006. The US granted asylum to 287 (1997), 296 (1998), 341 (1999), 269 (2000), 334 (2001), 184 (2002), 26 (2003), 35 (2004).

³ UNHCR, 2005.

began to educate the U.S. public about Afghanistan, Islam and the Afghan-American community. Among all U.S.-based Afghan CBOs, AC represents one of the most dedicated Afghan CBO with a broad focus on education, advocacy, community development, youth leadership, arts and culture.

Not all Afghan groups operate on the scale of AC or ASAP, but this does not prevent smaller groups from enhancing the lives of Afghans living in the immediate communities. For example, the Afghan Association of Maine, organized by the small Afghan community of Portland, Maine, provides cultural and religious activities and helps the community maintain their unique traditions. In Atlanta, the Afghan Community Foundation, which has also been working to promote Afghan culture and tradition with an added social service component, has had a notable role in the unity, development and prosperity of the Atlanta Afghan community since 1997. These smaller groups could benefit from partnerships with groups like AC and ASAP, but even on their own, they contribute to their constituents' well-being.

Advocacy groups complement the work of Afghan social services and cultural preservation of CBOs. For example, the Afghan Renascent Youth Association (ARYA) works to increase American awareness of the current situation in Afghanistan by participating in public events such as conferences, lectures and festivals. In a 2005 high profile event, ARYA participated on a panel with *Kite Runner* author Khaled Hosseini, leveraging the novel's literary success to expose readers to reality of life in Afghanistan.

International Linkages

Strong linkages exist between Afghan CBOs in the U.S. and Afghanistan. For example, the Afghan Friends Network (AFN) facilitates friendships, networks, and partnerships between organizations and cities in the U.S. and Afghanistan by organizing cultural, spiritual and technical exchange that enriches the lives of all participants. Founded in 1998 in the U.S. and registered in both the U.S. and in Afghanistan, Afghan Relief Organization (ARO) works on issues of humanitarian relief and education on the ground in Afghanistan. ARO offers women's literacy classes, computer training and in 2003, launched a technical education center in Kabul that serves over 800 students.

While finding feasible ways for grassroots organizations to link their home-countries can be challenging, Afghan groups based in the U.S. have found partners for productive linkages through the home-country based Afghans for Tomorrow (A4T) and Voluntary Association for Rehabilitation of Afghanistan (VARA). A4T is a non-profit, non-political organization dedicated to Afghanistan reconstruction and development and provides essential services through accessing the expertise, knowledge and dedication of Afghan professionals living abroad. A4T concentrates its programs in the areas of education, agriculture and health. In collaboration with its network of Afghan diaspora professionals, the organization helps assess, select, implement, and evaluate development projects in Afghanistan. VARA provides another mechanism for U.S.-based groups to link to Afghanistan and focuses its efforts on relief, rehabilitation and development. With a central goal of facilitating refugee return from Pakistan, VARA works with U.S.-based groups to provide agricultural and economic and capacity-building training. While currently working in partnership with other CBOs in Afghanistan, VARA staff shared their wish to establish more and better linkages with U.S.-based Afghan CBOs.

Afghan groups struggle with security-related challenges in the U.S. and Afghanistan. Following the September 11th attacks and the U.S.’s retaliatory actions against Afghanistan, Afghan CBOs encountered new difficulties in their U.S. work. While never based on an official policy targeting Afghan CBOs, the current U.S. environment has meant that, in addition to the typical pressure CBOs face to demonstrate the strength of their programming, Afghan CBOs have the added burden to show that they neither serve nor receive support from terrorists. This has translated into CBOs’ investing significantly in their operational, and particularly financial, record keeping. Rameen Javid, Afghan Communicator founder and president, shared that Afghan groups cannot afford room for doubt that their work does anything but benefit Afghan members of American society. In addition, according to VARA Executive Director Mr. Mojadedi, “Security is the most important challenge ahead for all aid groups in Afghanistan.” His organization lost 11 staff members during project implementation, which he explained may have happened because aid organizations are often the easiest and most vulnerable targets.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected in this study, Afghan CBOs have developed a strong network of cooperation to specialized services in the U.S., with more advanced CBOs serving as resource centers for those less experienced. Most U.S.-based CBOs work on expanding their linkages with other organizations, supporting mutual development through partnerships and coalitions. By empowering Afghans not only in the U.S. but in Afghanistan as well, Afghan CBOs pave the road for what Afghan Communicator’s director calls “the next power generation.”

BURMESE COMMUNITIES

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| Number of Organizations Researched: 15 |
| Number of Organizations Interviewed: 7 |
| Number of Organizations Visited: 0* |
| *Because of distant location or organizations’ unavailability |

Conflict and U.S. Migration

Rather than being notable for its diverse ethnic history and rich natural resources, Burma is infamous for having one of the world’s longest-running civil wars. After its 1948 independence from British rule, internal conflicts escalated along political and ethnic lines: between democratic and communist militants and the Burman (who comprise approximately 60 percent of total Burmese) dominated central government. Claiming that the country would break up without the military's guidance, the generals replaced the unstable civilian government with one-party rule with a military coup in March 1962. The Burman-dominated military leaders see ethnic diversity and recognition of rights of non-Burman people as threats to security and stability. The 1988 student-led demonstrations and nationwide protests demanding democratic reforms still reflect the mood that exists in the nation today. Since 1989 military authorities have promoted Myanmar as the official country name, but those international bodies and states who do not recognize the military junta, such as U.S., did not accept the name change and utilize Burma (nor do Burmese refugees).

Ongoing internal skirmishes, military repression of ethnic minorities, economically motivated forced relocations, and pervasive poverty have led to a constant exodus of political and economic Burmese refugees. For 15 years, around 1.5 million Burmese have fled to neighboring countries and the numbers gaining admittance to the United States has drastically increased, rising from 36 in 1995 to 1,056 in 2004⁴. The make up of refugee entrants has shifted, from pro-democracy Burmese college students in the early 1990s to the more recent waves that primarily include rural farmers and jungle fighters.

Overview of Organizations Reached

Most U.S.-based Burmese organizations share a common dream of freeing Burma and as a result, few concentrate on addressing issues concerning Burmese refugees and immigrants in the U.S. With most funds raised in the U.S. spent on projects in Burma and Thailand – a primary country of first asylum – Burmese exiles in the U.S. receive the majority of support not from Burmese CBOs but from mainstream service organizations like Catholic Charities and other faith-based service providers.

Many Burmese CBOs function as umbrella organizations for other small groups, sponsoring programs and projects to democratize Burma. For instance, the Burmese American Democratic Alliance formed in 2001 to become an umbrella organization for six CBOs run by Burmese and Burmese American activists from the San Francisco Bay Area working towards Democracy and Human Rights in Burma⁵. These grassroots organizations are unique in the context of U.S.-based Burmese CBOs, because they not only spread awareness about Burma's struggle, they also offer services to Burmese newcomers that include facilitating refuge adaptation to American society and promoting the welfare of the elderly, the sick and the temporarily unemployed. The National Burma Action Committee New York (NBACNY), founded in 1996, is another example of a Burmese umbrella organization that currently offers resettled Burmese support. Originally NBACNY formed to topple the Burma military regime and restore democracy. However, recognizing the growing needs of Burmese communities in the U.S. the committee expanded its activities. Their broad services include: translation, employment and citizenship assistance, legal help for asylum seekers, and health education.

Under Burma's military regime, the Chin – a non-Burman ethnic minority group – faces both human rights violations and the threat of losing their culture, literature, customs and traditions. The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), formed by Chin activists in 1995, is one of few organizations that provide support to human rights victims in Burma and U.S.-based Burmese refugees as well. In the past ten years, CHRO has grown from a small and inexperienced organization to a well-respected and professionally managed human rights organization. It serves Burmese refugees in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Dallas, Texas, Indianapolis, Indiana, and Battle Creek, Georgia.

⁴ 2004 Yearbook of immigration statistics, US department on Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2006.

⁵ Burmese American Democratic Alliance: Bay Area Burma Roundtable, Burma Association, Burma Humanitarian Mission, Burmese American Women's Alliance, Burma Relief (provide humanitarian aid to Burmese refugees at Thai Burma Border), Free Burma Berkeley.

International Linkages

While some U.S.-based Burmese CBOs offer programs to assist the American refugee committee, the primary goal of all groups remains the same: to empower grassroots U.S. activists to end the military dictatorship. Organizations usually strive to accomplish this mission through public education, leadership development initiatives, conferences and advocacy campaigns. As a result, Burmese groups have developed strong linkages with local NGOs in Burma and Thailand. An estimated 400,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) live on the Thai-Burma border, of which 150,000 live in refugee camps. Additionally, one million Burmese in Thailand are illegal migrant workers in factories, commercial farms and the food industry to support their families⁶. In most cases, U.S.-based Burmese organizations serve the communities along the Thai-Burmese border, where living conditions are known to be extremely harsh. For example, in response to the government's violent crackdown resulting from the 1988 pro-democracy demonstrations, the Burmese Relief Center (BRC) provided medical supplies to overcrowded Rangoon hospitals, treating students, monks, and other unarmed civilians that had been gunned down by the military. For 11 years, BRC has provided encouragement and material support for pro-democracy activists, raising funds for in-country efforts while establishing a U.S. market for Burmese refugee-produced refugee crafts. Currently, expanded relief efforts serve the thousands of refugees living on the Thai-Burma border, providing them with food, medical supplies, educational materials, training and financial support.

The Karen Emergency Relief Fund (KERF), since 1992, has been documenting human rights abuses in Burma and in Thai refugee camps with a focus on Karen ethnic refugees, who represent Burma's largest ethnic minority group and who have been victim to government sponsored violence. KERF's efforts include providing humanitarian assistance, such as food, shelter, medical and health supplies, and educational and self-help projects, and since 2000, therapy services for victims of rape and torture. KERF operates from both the U.S. and an office Thailand.

The Burma Border Projects (BBP), also operating in Thailand, has undertaken similar efforts to those of KERF have been undertaken. Along with providing vital humanitarian services to Burmese people forced to live in Thailand, the BBP has addressed mental health and psychosocial consequences of trauma resulting from human rights abuses and dislocation. The BBP collaborates with local organizations that support and provide assistance to Burmese refugees, migrants and internally displaced people, by providing culturally responsive education and training. BBP also instruct indigenous trainers, medics, community and religious leaders and teachers on how to provide counseling services, conduct mental health assessments and manage crises.

Unlike other refugees in the U.S., Burmese face the added challenge of adjusting to life in the U.S. while cut off from loved ones in Burma. The Burmese military monitors calls and letters coming into the country and therefore family and friends remaining in Burma could be severely punished if caught communicating with exiled relatives. As a result, refugees often must abandon connections with family and friends left behind. In addition, members of minority groups, like the Karen and the Chin, claim that even in terms of the scarcely reported Burmese crisis in general, the plight of minority groups are severely neglected by the news media.

⁶ Burma Border Projects statistics.

Conclusion

Most U.S.-based Burmese organizations have a political focus which includes empowering grassroots activists, educating the public, engaging in advocacy campaigns and producing conferences to end the military dictatorship in Burma. Consequently, few Burmese CBOs directly serve Burmese refugees and immigrants in the U.S. In fact, Burmese exiles are most commonly assisted by U.S. organizations like Catholic Charities. Funds raised in the U.S. usually will support international projects in Burma or Thailand and as a result, U.S.-based Burmese groups have developed strong linkages with local NGOs in both of these countries.

CONGOLESE COMMUNITIES

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| Number of Organizations Researched: 18 |
| Number of Organizations Interviewed: 9 |
| Number of Organizations Visited: 2 |
| Fondation Shalupe - Braintree, Massachusetts |
| Congolese Women's Association of New England (CWANE) – Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts |

Conflict and U.S. Migration

Considered cursed rather than blessed by its vast wealth of natural resources, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been victim to serious conflict both before and after its 1960 independence from Belgium. Primarily revolving around natural resources, DRC's conflicts have involved non-African powers, neighboring African countries and numerous internal ethnicities and tribe. Turmoil escalated in the mid-1990s, sparked by the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and resulting in two wars (known as the First and Second Congo Wars although recognized also as one continuous conflict) and the end of Mobutu Sese Seko's dictatorship. Referred to as "Africa's World War" because it involved nine African countries and an estimated 20 armed groups, it was fought primarily by militia groups. Almost 4 million people died as a result, the majority not directly from the conflict but from starvation and disease, and 2.2 million were internally displaced⁷ while hundreds of thousands became refugees scattered in African countries boarding DRC⁸ as well as throughout Europe, South Africa and the U.S.

Congolese migration to the United States started as early as the 1960s following Congolese independence from Belgium and the subsequent rise of Mobutu, but in the early 1990s the Congo Wars increased the numbers of Congolese seeking refuge and asylum in the U.S. While globally, a total of 462,203 Congolese held refugee status by the end of 2004,⁹ the U.S. State department reports that Congolese refugee admittance to the U.S. rose in significant numbers in 1996. Since then Congolese entering the U.S. has averaged several hundred per year, with 1349 refugees admitted in 2000, 251 in 2003 and 569 in 2004.¹⁰ Of the total number of Congolese recognized as asylum seekers by the UNHCR in 2004, 184 received asylum by the U.S.¹¹

⁷ The International Rescue Committee: The IRC in Democratic Republic of Congo, Dec, 2005.

⁸ UNHCR: Repatriation and Reintegration of D.R.C. Refugees, Jan-Dec, 2005.

⁹ UNHCR 2004 Global Refugee Trends. June 17 2005. p.18.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; 2003, 2004.

¹¹ UNHCR 2004 Global Refugee Trends. June 17 2005. p.49.

Overview of Organizations Reached

The current U.S.-based Congolese population is roughly 30,000, with main concentrations in Raleigh, Charlotte, North Carolina, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, the Washington, DC metropolitan area, New York, New Jersey and Boston¹². As reported by the CBOs interviewed, Congolese organizations formed in response to the plight of Congolese both within the United States and DRC, recognizing that mainstream U.S. service providers and international humanitarian organizations operating in Congo did not adequately meet the Congolese community's needs. While these CBOs serve refugees, asylees and economic migrants also comprise the population and therefore CBOs do not distinguish between the different kinds of immigrants that seek assistance (although they may have specialized assistance for those that are refugees or asylees).

The main services these CBOs offer in the U.S. include: language assistance (including translation and ESL classes); health services; cultural/community building activities; employment services; citizenship (including legal assistance, etc.); housing; networking; advocacy, awareness and information dissemination. While select organizations provide cultural programming (Kikimbo117 in New Jersey and Leja Bulela in California), U.S.-focused CBOs predominantly offer social services. Operating at different levels of capacity and professionalism, these organizations function as one-stop clearing-houses for French-speaking immigrants, providing links and referrals to mainstream organizations specializing in the services refugees/immigrants need (affordable health clinics, legal services, ESL classes, job sourcing). An organization like the Bronx, NY-based African Salvation Group that provides in-house social services and health care is unusual amongst Congolese CBOs. Mostly small referral-focused organizations, groups such as AMANI: Society of Charity and Justice in Chicago, Illinois, Council of Christians United for the Development of Congo (CCUDC) in Texas, and the Massachusetts-based groups Congolese Women's Association of New England (CWANE) and Fondation Shalupe, extend their efforts beyond information sharing, directly participating in activities such as accompanying clients to medical appointments and translating legal documents.

The several Congolese CBOs functioning as advocates and an information source for the Congolese community either operate through interactive websites (congo-boston.com and Congo Vision based in Charlotte, North Carolina) or as advocacy coalitions that lobby the U.S., Congolese and other diaspora organizations (including Dignity Congo and Federation des Congolese Etranger, both in Washington D.C.) to bring greater attention to and involvement in the DRC. These groups, although incorporated in the U.S. and with the majority of staff/volunteers working from the U.S., consider themselves as serving an international purpose. For example, the Federation des Congolese Etranger focuses on economic and political reform in Congo and is also the first organization to bring together Congolese CBOs from across the United States. Several federation member CBOs, like the Congolese Community of California, speak of the Federation as a uniting force for immigrant Congolese. Currently, these groups are organizing around DRC's first democratic elections scheduled for this summer by advocating for diaspora communities without voting rights unless they return to Congo.

Each Congolese organization interviewed expressed frustration at the lack of media coverage and public awareness of the on-going conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the extent of

¹² Fall New School/IRC Report, "Resettled in America," p. 7

the violence and devastation and the high death toll. This neglect is particularly painful for community activists because of the role outside countries, both in Africa and in the West, have played in exacerbating the conflict and because of the attention neighboring conflicts, like those in Southern Sudan and Darfur receive. While they maintain that they are not trying to reduce the horror of the conflicts in their neighboring country, they believe that if more people knew about Congo, more support would be available and the situation would improve.

International Linkages

Of Congolese CBOs interviewed, almost all have established linkages with the DRC with activities ranging from fundraising to providing financial support for humanitarian projects on the ground to the actual establishment of DRC-based offices that organize and implement their own programs. It appears that amongst groups that fundraise for projects, they have chosen recipients based on public recognition. For example, groups like CWANE and the Congolese Community of California both chose to sponsor public fundraisers in support of a women’s clinic in Goma after seeing the facility featured on an episode of Oprah. Of the groups interviewed who directly implement development projects, most focus on Kinshasa, believing that to strengthen the country, efforts need to begin in the nation’s capital city. The African Salvation Group’s programs include: infectious disease prevention and education (HIV/AIDS, STDs and TB and with targeting to women), nutrition and food security, and community capacity-building. Fondation Shalupe serves street youth and sex workers with education and micro-credit programs. AMANI currently provides orphan children with nutritional meals but previously had invested in land and pigs in Kinshasa, only to have the pigs looted by soldiers. Leja Bulela is the only organization interviewed that targets the conflict zone by investing in infrastructure such as the health center construction in an IDP camp sheltering 30,000 in Kasai providence.

Conclusion

Congolese CBOs’ avenues for response have taken multiple forms, primarily concentrating on social services, cultural preservation, community-building and advocacy/awareness, with organizations typically beginning operations by focusing either on populations based in the U.S. or those in the DRC. As their work evolved, many began adding projects that would cross over into the U.S. or Congo-based populations not yet being served. Interviews showed that U.S. based Congolese CBOs usually rely on volunteer leadership who, passionate and committed to improving life in Congo and for the Congolese diaspora, pursue their CBO efforts in addition to other salaried employment, often working from volunteers’ homes. However, while U.S. staff accept the burden of unpaid work, organizations with branches in Congo, such as Fondation Shalupe, Leja Bulela and AMANI: Society of Charity and Justice, try to ensure that their Congo-based staff receive monetary compensation since employment in Congo is scarce.

LIBERIAN COMMUNITIES

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| Number of Organizations Researched: 19 |
| Number of Organizations Interviewed: 7 |
| Number of Organizations Visited: 1 |
| African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA) – Philadelphia, PA |

Conflict and U.S. Migration

Liberia has a unique history in Africa because of the American Colonization Society project, which, in 1822, began sending freed slaves from the U.S. to establish a “new” African state. For nearly 140 years, these “Americo-Liberians” dominated Liberian politics, excluding the indigenous population from formal political participation and perpetuating inequality within Liberian society. Despite reforms in the 1970’s under William Tolbert, civil unrest ensued and in 1979 Master Sergeant Samuel Doe took power through a bloody military coup. A decade later, Charles Taylor led the rebel National Patriotic Front (NFPL) to eventually overthrow Doe in 1990. In an infamous demonstration of the NFPL cruelty, Liberian Prince Johnson tortured and killed Doe and documented the murder on video. For nearly two decades Taylor led the Liberian government and perpetuated violence and civil war that had devastating implications for the stability and economic development of neighboring Sierra Leone and Guinea. In 2003, a comprehensive peace agreement ended nearly 14 years of civil war and Charles Taylor, first exiled to Nigeria, now is in U.N. Special Court custody awaiting trial for crimes against humanity. After two years of transitional government rule, democratic elections in late 2005 brought Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa’s first female president, to power.

Despite Liberians’ special historical relationship with the U.S. before the civil war, Liberians did not immigrate in large numbers to the U.S., although those that did were primarily students and professionals. While the total number of Liberians immigrating to the U.S. generally grew throughout the 1990’s¹³, the number entering as refugees or asylees significantly increased, jumping from 3,033 in 1994 to 15,484 in 2003¹⁴. Liberian NGOs and CBOs exist in most U.S. states, but the most significant populations of Liberians live in Minnesota (considered one of the highest concentrations), the New York Tri-State area, the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, Massachusetts, Maryland, Texas and Georgia.

Overview of Organizations Reached

U.S.-based Liberian CBOs’ mission and work has evolved over the past two decades, reflecting shifts in Liberian politics and the needs of the Liberian diaspora. Some organizations like the Union of Liberian Associations of the Americas (ULAA), the African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA), and the Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island (LCARI), started by serving Liberian students and other African immigrants, and then shifted to assist new refugees and asylees needing social services and support. Some organizations began in direct response to the needs of those coming to the U.S. during the conflict years, developing programs that offered educational assistance, legal services, health programs, job placement and conflict resolution in schools. Other organizations, such as the Tappita District Development Association,

¹³ “1996 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.” U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service. October 1997. The number of Liberians immigrating to the U.S. from 1986 to 1994 are as follows: 618 (1986); 622 (1987); 769 (1988); 1,175 (1989); 2,004 (1990); 1,292 (1991); 999 (1992); 1,050 (1993); 1,762 (1994). “2004 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.” Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. January 2006. The number of Liberians immigrating to the U.S. from 1995 to 2003 are as follows: 1,929 (1995); 2,206 (1996); 2,216 (1997); 1,617 (1998); 1,358 (1999); 1,575 (2000); 2,785 (2001); 2,879 (2002); 1,768 (2003).

¹⁴ “2003 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook.” The number of Liberians entering the U.S. as refugees or asylees from 1994 to 2003 are as follows: 3,033 (1994); 3,768 (1995); 4,609 (1996); 4,717 (1997); 5,627 (1998); 8,004 (1999); 10,822 (2000); 14,430 (2001); 14,868 (2002); 15,484 (2003).

the Liberian Mandingo Association of New York (LIMANY), United Nimba Citizens Council (UNICCO) and Liberian History Education and Development (LIHEDE) formed in response to the conflict and with the intention of rebuilding and supporting the community in Liberia. These organizations work to provide materials such as books, clothing and medical supplies, support development projects such as building schools, libraries and radio stations, and/or provide consulting to start businesses, NGOs or other projects that support post-conflict development and reconstruction.

International Linkages

U.S.-based Liberian NGOs and CBOs work in a combination of areas. While the primary focus may be in service to the communities in the U.S. (refugee, immigrant and other groups in need), many groups also maintain connections and linkages to Liberia and provide support through development or social services initiatives. Yet only a few organizations actively pursue simultaneous work and service provision in both the U.S. and Liberia. ACANA primarily provides social services in the U.S., but has also registered as an NGO in Liberia to provide adult education and English language classes. Conversely, UNICCO primarily focuses on development of Nimba County, supporting construction of schools and health clinics, but because of a rising need in the U.S. communities, the group has expanded to work on health, education and legal support to refugees and immigrants in the U.S.

Many organizations working specifically on development have ties to Liberia through personal, professional and political connections. LIHEDE for example, focuses on creating contacts and linkages in Liberia for Liberians who are in the U.S. and interested in supporting development in general, from business prospects to health campaigns. LIMANY also works directly in Liberia, providing school materials and supporting resettlement of refugees in Guinea. LIMANY collaborates with organizations in the U.S. such as ACANA to facilitate some of these transactions, but hopes to expand these collaborations. One challenge is finding organizations that do not have particular ethnic, religious, or geographical focuses. LIMANY sees these differentiations as something that needs to be overcome after surviving so many years of internal conflict between countrymen. At this point many organizations focus on a particular region in Liberia or working with their particular ethnic group. While there are also a number of organizations that do not make these differentiations, and to many this strategy of self-organization is logical, there is still separation and distinction between Liberians because of the brutal nature of the conflict and the targeting of particular groups.

Organizations such as the Tappita District Development Association (TADDA) and UNICCO, whose head offices are in Atlanta, Georgia, focus on connections and relationships with their home districts to support development projects. In the Tappita district, TADDA is working on the renovation of the largest high school and represents the kind of education-fostering projects implemented by many of these CBOs in Liberia. In addition to establishing linkages directly to particular Liberian districts and to Liberia as a whole, organizations such as these also collaborate with each other. TADDA may focus the majority of its efforts on the Tappita district, but the group also collaborates with UNICCO who focuses on the entire county. Both groups are members of ULAA, the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas, which has a number of branch organizations across the U.S. and primarily works on advocacy for the Liberian diaspora.

Conclusion

Liberian-run organizations provide specialized services in the U.S. and Liberia that other development and social service organizations cannot provide. For example, because ACANA is a small NGO located within the community, the group can attend to individual members' particular needs instead of becoming an inaccessible and bureaucratic institution. Other organizations act as resource centers supporting development through research, linkages and partnerships. LIHEDE is one such organization that focuses entirely on the betterment of Liberia through providing free research and consultations with people interested in investing in Liberia, starting development projects or working in the country. The organization's philanthropic mission encourages the Liberian community to help in the development of their country through efforts from within rather than depending on external assistance.

SIERRA LEONEAN COMMUNITIES

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| Number of Organizations Researched: 18 |
| Number of Organizations Interviewed: 6 |
| Number of Organizations Visited: 1 |
| Nah We Yone, Inc. – New York, New York |

Conflict and U.S. Migration

Sierra Leone gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1961. While the country generated significant income through trade in diamonds during this decade, much of the profits were not equally distributed within society. Ruling elites held the concentration of wealth which left the majority of the population, primarily indigenous tribes, outside of this prosperity. Frustrated with the growing disparity, Foday Sankoh of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) began an armed insurrection with the support of then-rebel leader and later president Taylor from neighboring Liberia. In 1991 the military took over governmental powers, yet horrendous violence continued throughout the decade. The years of conflict in Sierra Leone are characterized primarily by the role the diamond trade played in fueling rebel forces as well as the brutal tactics often used by the RUF of amputating the limbs of women and children.

The 1996 elections brought Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to office, but the RUF in partnership with a second rebel group, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) challenged his power. Kabbah could only reassume office with the help of ECOWAS in 1998. A peace agreement was signed in 1999, yet ultimately failed until a second agreement was signed with the RUF in 2002. After nearly a decade of war, "nearly half of Sierra Leone's prewar population was displaced, 50,000 were dead, 100,000 were mutilated, and over a quarter million women were raped."¹⁵

As a result of the ongoing conflict, refugees from Sierra Leone entering the U.S. grew steadily throughout the 1990's, from 72 in 1994 to 6,570 in 2003¹⁶. Prior to the conflict Sierra Leoneans had immigrated to the U.S. as students or professionals in small numbers (less than 1000/year)¹⁷,

¹⁵ UNIFEM portal on Women, Peace and Security. www.womenwarpeace.org

¹⁶ UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, 2003.

¹⁷ 1996 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service. October 1997. Sierra Leoneans entered the U.S. as immigrants in the following

but beginning in 1998 the number entering as refugees significantly increased¹⁸. Of the 20,831 Sierra Leoneans living in the U.S., most have resettled in the U.S. in Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey and California¹⁹. Many that have recently entered the U.S. are challenged to overcome issues resulting from years of conflict, such as illiteracy, youth that have large gaps in their education and post-conflict trauma.

Overview of Organizations Reached

U.S.-based Sierra Leonean organizations primarily formed either in response to the growing needs of those residing in the U.S., or more recently, as development and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation facilitators in Sierra Leone. Organizations such as Nah We Yone, Inc. and Roza Promotions work in New York City providing support to Sierra Leoneans living in the area. They offer a range of services such as post-trauma counseling, health, education, legal programs, cultural and recreational services. Education serves as a primary focus across these U.S.-based CBOs, and therefore many organizations provide technical training, adult education and literacy programs, both in the U.S. and in Sierra Leone. For example, the Organization for the Advancement of Literacy (OFAL) provides computer training and literacy courses in both Washington D.C. and Freetown.

International Linkages

Organizations such as Save Heritage and Rehabilitate the Environment (SHARE), which operates Maryland but whose main offices are in Freetown, began work to address immediate needs during the conflict for refugees, internally displaced people and orphans of the conflict. SHARE has now moved on to post-conflict developmental projects with groups such as the International Campaign Against Landmines, and through providing education and awareness programs, both in Sierra Leone and abroad. Other organizations also work directly with a particular region or district, such as the Koinadugu Descendent Organization which works on constructing an educational and technical center for the district of Koinadugu.

While a few organizations have federated across the U.S., such as the Koinadugu Descendent Organization that has member branches in over ten states, most U.S.-based organizations collaborate with others in Sierra Leone. Some, such as SHARE, work actively with international organizations such as UNHCR, the International Campaign Against Landmines, and CARE, yet most Sierra Leonean U.S.-based organizations collaborate in Sierra Leone with small NGOs, local governments or religious groups. UJIMA for Africa Development, for example, has a direct partnership with the local authorities of Bumpeh Chiefdom in the Northern Province. Because

numbers from 1986 to 1993: 323 (1986); 453 (1987); 571 (1988); 939 (1989); 1,290 (1990); 951 (1991); 693 (1992); 690 (1993); 698 (1994). And according to the 2004 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. January 2006, Sierra Leoneans entered into the U.S. as immigrants from 1995 to 2003 as follows: 919 (1995); 1,918 (1996); 1,884 (1997); 955 (1998); 976 (1999); 1,590 (2000); 1,884 (2001); 2,250 (2002); and 1,496 (2003).

¹⁸ Ibid. According to the UNHCR, Sierra Leoneans entering into the U.S. from 1994-2003 are as follows: 72 (1994); 218 (1995); 310 (1996); 406 (1997); 738 (1998); 1,612 (1999); 2,949 (2000); 5,330 (2001); 5,664 (2002); and 6,570 (2003).

¹⁹ According to U.S. Census Data from 2000, Sierra Leoneans living in these 5 states constitute 60.9% of the total population of foreign born Sierra Leoneans living in the U.S. The Migration Policy Institute. www.Migrationinformation.org

many groups in the U.S. are relatively young, collaboration is something organizations express interest in pursuing, although just a few have established formal linkages with other U.S.-based Sierra Leonean organizations. Groups like Nah We Yone and Roza Promotions have worked within the U.S. with other social service organizations and those serving the larger African immigrant populations.

Conclusion

While Sierra Leonean U.S.-based organizations do not have the history or the strength in numbers as other immigrant or refugee-run organizations, a number of innovative CBOs are looking to solve problems through an alternative lens. For example, a number of organizations in the U.S. are implementing innovative ways to support post-conflict reconstruction and development through either the combination of youth and cultural programs or private-public partnerships. UJIMA for Africa Development uses inter-cultural exchanges between U.S. and Sierra Leonean youth to generate awareness and collaboration in Sierra Leone’s reconstruction and development. Sierra Visions, Inc. works from the Washington D.C. area to foster development through partnerships with the private sector, supporting trade, technology, tourism, training and transportation. OFAL is simultaneously addressing employment and skills training issues for the community in the U.S. and in Sierra Leone by focusing on computer training and technology education. By providing training for technical skills, the Sierra Leonean community will be better prepared to enter the workforce and contribute to the development of the country as well as the U.S.-based community.

SOUTHERN SUDANESE COMMUNITIES

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| Number of Organizations Researched: 15 |
| Number of Organizations Interviewed: 7 |
| Number of Organizations Visited: 2 |
| Action for Self Reliance Association (ASERELA), Portland, Maine |
| Southern Sudanese Organization (SSO) – Lynn, Massachusetts |

Conflict and U.S. Migration

Whether one considers the Second Sudanese War as sparked by Khartoum’s 1983 nation-wide imposition of Shari’a law or the inevitable continuation of a half century of North-South fighting in a country artificially forced together by colonialism, the 22-year-old conflict’s human statistics reveal the magnitude of devastation: Two million Southern Sudanese killed²⁰, 4.4 million displaced (the world’s largest displaced population), 15,000 women and children abducted for slavery by militiamen and 3.2 million deprived of sufficient water and food from the civil war exacerbated drought²¹. In addition, limited investment in the South over the many years of war caused what humanitarian agencies call a “lost generation” lacking educational opportunities, adequate healthcare or chances for decent employment. Of the 4.4 million Southern Sudanese displaced, only 11 percent escaped the country, therefore leaving the majority homeless within Sudan’s borders. While the war officially ended in January 2005, SPLA leader John Garang’s death in August 2005 and the on-going Darfur conflict (called genocide by many) threatens the country’s stability and the ability of all regions to rebuild.

²⁰ U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Sudan Country Report 2005. www.refugees.org/countryreports

²¹ U.N. high Commissioner for Refugees, April 2005.

Since the early 1990s, more than 20,000 Sudanese refugees resettled in the United States. While the percentage of Sudanese who could leave war-torn Southern Sudan encompasses a fraction of the actual displaced, American immigration statistics show Southern Sudanese have a favored status among applicants from different nationalities. For example, as recently as 2003 the U.S. government approved 86 percent of Southern Sudanese applicants (resulting in 2,140 arrivals)²². The prominent role the Christian American community has played in their resettlement (because of their religious victimization) may explain the high acceptance rate and this favoritism in general. The Sudanese refugee community is unusual because unlike other refugee groups who likely immigrate as families, orphaned “Lost Boys” chosen by the U.S. government for resettlement from 1999-2001²³ comprise one-fifth of the Southern Sudanese community. In addition, unlike the majority of populations considered for this study, almost all Southern Sudanese currently living in the U.S. gained admittance as refugees.

Overview of Organizations Reached

The research revealed that fewer Southern Sudanese organizations exist than those in support of other refugee populations, and most were established in the late 1990s or in the early 2000s. Unlike other refugee communities across the U.S., non-Sudanese organizations formed in order to help the Southern Sudanese refugee. Some organized as faith-based initiatives in response to the Southern Sudanese religious victimization and others, like the Chicago Association for the Lost Boys of Sudan, organized to serve these young men who received a high level of media coverage upon their arrival. These organizations, while often community-based, have not been considered for this analysis because those encountered did not have Southern Sudanese leadership or integral Sudanese involvement in program implementation²⁴. For Sudanese founded-CBOs, most were established to better assist refugees in their resettlement or to reach out to the communities left behind in Sudan or in countries of first asylum. CBO leaders explained that individual organizations rarely attempt both domestic and international programming because of the limited resources available challenging organizations’ abilities to adequately assist one target community.

Southern Sudanese in the U.S. are concentrated primarily in Arizona, Nebraska, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine. Sudanese were initially resettled according to the resettlement policies of individual states, but many subsequently moved to join other Southern Sudanese or in search of more affordable areas. The majority of active, U.S.-focused CBOs developed services to mitigate the significant difficulties Sudanese community members faced as they tried to integrate into what a member of the Maine-based Sudanese Community Association (SCA) called a “far more technologically advanced and culturally foreign” American environment. These CBOs typically formed to directly provide or connect clients to basic services like translation, education and healthcare, housing, legal, and employment assistance. Yet only two organizations interviewed, the Southern Sudanese Organization (SSO) in Lynn, Massachusetts and the Arizona Lost Boys Center in Phoenix, currently have the capacity and

²² Batalova, Jeanne, *Spotlight on Refugees and Asylees in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute.

²³ Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Annual Report to Congress, 2002.

²⁴ Since many American-founded faith-based Sudanese assistance groups do operate in the U.S. and offer much needed services to Sudanese refugees, a list of these organizations has been included in the report appendix.

resources to provide these services. For example, SSO operates as part of an immigrant coalition that receives funding from the government, shares an office building and an administrative secretary, and seeks funding together. This on-going partnership and support allows the organization to afford two part-time staff members and therefore provide consistent assistance to the Massachusetts-wide Sudanese community. One innovation that SSO has had a chance to develop, the Economic Empowerment Greenhouse Project, will enable community members who never received formal education in Sudan use their strong agricultural skills to support themselves and their families.

Those groups that never could effectively offer social services either changed their focus to cultural and awareness-building activities or terminated operations all together. For example, the previously mentioned SCA, modeled after Massachusetts-based SSO, wanted to provide social services but funding problems and community discord interfered. Instead of disbanding, it refocused its energy and resources to produce cultural celebrations and public awareness efforts. The organization explains that these events, which include a public demonstration protesting the Egyptian police violence against Sudanese in Cairo and successfully lobbied the Maine legislature to divest from Sudan, not only unite, educate and empower the Maine-based Southern Sudanese community, but also educate the mainstream population about Sudan's history and culture.

International Linkages

Only two groups interviewed actively pursue programs on the ground in Southern Sudan or in countries of first asylum. Action for Self Reliance Association (ASRELA) based in Portland, Maine, an organization with a primarily Acholi leadership, is one of few Sudanese CBOs that formed with the mission of helping Sudanese overseas, specifically those left behind in the Kiryandongo refugee camp in Uganda. From an initial mission to empower that community, ASRELA constructed and now sponsors a K-6 school and has partners with and receives international NGO funding from international NGOs, including the IRC, to maintain the school's operations. While no other U.S.-based groups implement on-the-ground efforts at this level, Cush Community Relief International, based in Nebraska, currently receives support from USAID to investigate a possible water and education project in Southern Sudan. USAID pledged support of the project implementation phase, but since the efforts still remain in the planning phase (as of March 2006) the Nebraska-based volunteers express doubts about what they realistically can accomplish. The greatest challenges facing both organizations include limited funding and difficulty in finding trustworthy partners in Sudan and Uganda.

Conclusion

Sudanese CBOs primarily perform social service functions both in the United States and abroad, although some do incorporate cultural programming to unite community and pass on Southern Sudanese traditions to children quickly absorbing the American way of life. While early in their development, Southern Sudanese CBOs have experienced programmatic evolutions. For example, those CBOs that began with an international focus launched small-scale efforts in the United States because they could not continue to concentrate on activities overseas while the Sudanese in their communities exhibited significant needs that remained unmet. Other groups added local programs to cope with newly arising issues such as children acculturating and

learning English far faster than their parents therefore threatening parental authority and the traditional Sudanese way of life.

III. Organizational Assessments and International Linkages

The Assessments

Based upon the survey data and review, the New School team selected organizations that best fit the profile that the IRC wanted to explore – organizations that are leaders in their community, are run by and for refugees and/or immigrants, provide services to the refugee/immigrant population within their communities and, finally, have connections or operate programs in their home countries. From several recommendations made by the New School student research team, IRC nominated eight organizations that would be invited to participate in an organizational assessment by the student team. The assessment purpose was to help each organization determine its specific strengths and challenges using tools provided to the students through an IRC training, and to share those tools with the organizations for their future use.

The team selected the following three tools from those provided to use as part of each assessment:

- 1) Introductory/warm-up questions
- 2) The Sigmoid Curve
- 3) The IRC Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)

One or more of the research team members conducted the assessments in-person at a location of the organization's choosing. Locations ranged from office spaces (when they had it) and rented conference space, to the homes of organizations' leaders. Each meeting lasted between two and three hours and took place either during office hours or in the organization members' spare time.

Some assessments included only the founder/director, while other assessments involved both leadership and staff. The self-assessment outcomes depended on a variety of factors, most significantly the number of staff/board members participating and inter-personal dynamics. The IRC OCAT tool also produced varied results depending on the organization. For example, it appeared that groups operating with more formal structures, meaning that they had paid staff, worked from rented office space, or were accountable to one or more outside donors, were more critical of themselves during the assessment than those groups that operate less formally. The team concluded that this might be a result of the more formal groups' ability to see their operations in comparison with other non-profit institutions while the organizations that operate, for example from home and depend only on volunteers, do not have a larger institutional context in which to understand their own performance. Details of such dynamics are indicated in each organizational assessment report.

African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA)

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Date of visit: April 13, 2006

Assessment Participants: Voffee Jabateh (CEO) and David Howard (Director of Arts and Culture)

Conducted by: Anna Ivantsov and Sarah Silliman

The African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA), located in West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, started in 1997 as an organization to support African artists in their cultural and business endeavors and has changed to support refugees, asylees and other community members. Last year, the organization served over 4000 refugees by providing educational, counseling and referral services. ACANA's target population is about 60% African Immigrant/Refugee, 40% African American, and 10% other. ACANA provides all services for free, and funding comes from federal and state governments, private donations and foundations.

ACANA now offers a wide range of programs. As it expanded its services from providing arts and cultural programming to adult education and support to refugees and immigrants, the children of immigrant families also demanded services. In response, ACANA initiated programs such as after-school programming and summer youth camps. A counseling center was also established for children, particularly for refugee children who experienced trauma during the conflict. For this program ACANA connected with the Children's Crisis Treatment Center (CcTC). In addition to CcTC, ACANA partners with the Coalition of African Communities in Philadelphia (AFRICOM), Philadelphia Councilwomen Jannine Blackwell's Office, the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition (SEAMAAC), the Pennsylvania Refugee Resettlement Program, and the Ethiopian Community Development Council.

Currently ACANA is planning the *Millennium Music Festival*, an annual event that includes live music, musicians and soccer. ACANA also hosts an annual *Echoes of Africa Festival*, sponsored by a West Philadelphia city council member and the City of Philadelphia.

Two primary issues that ACANA identified early on in the assessment included:

- *Funding Struggles* – First, ACANA recently applied for National Endowment of the Arts funding, and were denied. Staff members would like to know why, and then how to improve future applications. ACANA's programming is two-pronged: *arts and culture* (part of the original mission, which is desired to be promoted) and *social service/after school programming*. Most funding sources are interested in their social service aspect, yet ACANA wants to grow and expand in both areas.
- *Organizational Expansion/Growth*: Currently ACANA has only 3 full-time staff members but also must rely upon "periphery staff", including a grantwriter and a lawyer who provide legal assistance and referrals. ACANA is grateful for this part-time assistance, but feels that full-time staff would be best in order to adequately meet the needs of the community in these areas. Yet at this point, the organization cannot afford to upgrade these positions. In addition, as community demand increase ACANA must

expand programming and their physical size and therefore are constructing a new building at 5200 Chester Avenue, an initiative included in their second five-year strategic plan. The building will have a recording studio, which will allow ACANA to better promote African musicians. Work on how to raise funds from numerous sources, one of whom is a Pennsylvania State Senator who supports their shift into a “one-stop” service center also gets attention. This goal is in line with ACANA’s mission of being a holistic, multi-service organization.

Organizational Assessment

Many insights arose from through using the assessment tools with Voffee and David. The primary recurring themes are outlined as follows:

- Need to adjust the mission statement to fit changed programming and goals. They have not revisited it after the number of changes that have occurred, although they do say that the staff, community and overall strategic plan reflect changes in the organization.
- A key strength is that they are adapting and responding to the community’s needs. They feel that this makes the organization stand out, as opposed to other refugee service organizations where clients must stand in line for hours to get a simple question answered.
- Board of Directors issues kept coming up. It is clear that the board is not functioning in the sense that they are contributing work, fundraising, etc.
- They really would like to hire someone fulltime (IRC assessment referred to a “fundraising committee”) that would devote their work fully to fundraising and grant management.
- Aside from funding, ACANA’s primary challenge comes from how difficult it is to grow in time with community demands. The organization is in high demand within the community, but finding it hard to adjust to their “growing pains”. As a result, everything must grow with this process, from the mission statement, to the space. It seems that programmatically and strategically they are aware and adapting to these changing needs, but formal processes such as evaluations and budget adjustments need to be established to keep the organization moving in a positive direction.

ACANA is a force in the community. It is in a struggling neighborhood in West Philadelphia, but when we were there, from about 11:30 am to 2:30 pm, so many people came in, young and old, volunteers and children. It was clear to us that the organization has a strong presence and is a place that many people use and contribute to.

Adding to its strength, ACANA is partnering and working with a number of organizations, institutions and coalitions in Philadelphia and elsewhere. ACANA leaders are proud of to be known as the area’s only African-based organization, and the only one serving this population in the entire state. ACANA members see their individual attention and response to community members’ needs as a unique quality. Instead of having to deal with the typical bureaucracy of other immigrant or refugee service organizations, ACANA provides individualized services with cultural awareness. This could be an area of struggle as the organization progresses. It is easy to get into the trap of over-diversifying services and overextending organization staff. Hopefully ACANA will be able to find a good balance between the community’s growing needs and the ability to adequately meet them.

Afghan Communicator

Location: Flushing, New York

Date of visit: April 12, 2006

Assessment participants: Moshref Rameen Javid (Executive Director)

Conducted by: Anna Ivantsov and Rachel Nadelman

In 1997, Afghan Communicator (AC) began as an academic, cultural and literary magazine, marking the first academic Afghan magazine serving the Afghan community worldwide. The tragedy of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent bombing of Afghanistan in October, 2001 revealed the lack of information and resources about Afghanistan and Islam as a whole. As a result, AC greatly expanded its role by reaching out to educate both Afghans and Americans about the Afghan and Muslim communities in the U.S. In addition to its work in the U.S., AC cooperates with Canadian CBOs by inviting them to attend AC organized events such as Afghan Heritage Day, Afghan Art & Film festival and other conferences. Besides the main office in NYC, AC also maintains a Kabul office.

Today AC is a New York community-based, grassroots organization dedicated to education, advocacy, youth leadership, community development, and art and culture. In 1999, AC hosted the first Inter Afghan Youth Summit in New York City, a conference of young educated Afghans from U.S., Canada and Asia, to discuss issues concerning the Afghan community in America. AC also organized roundtables with the Association for Study of Nationalities Conference in 2001 and 2002 at Columbia University.

Though most services are offered in the U.S., AC remains connected to Afghanistan. In 2004, AC opened a Kabul office to distribute small aid from the West directly to charities of donors' choice. To supplement Kabul office expenses, AC runs a low budget guesthouse for travelers inside Afghanistan. AC also collaborates with other Afghan organizations in the U.S. For example, in 2005, with Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) in New Jersey, AC helped to build classes and purchase supplies for the Amir Shir Ali Khan School in Kabul. AC assisted RVCC with identifying the school in need, providing artists and performers for a US fundraiser in April 2004.

Before beginning the organizational assessment, we asked Rameen to describe his most enjoyable work day at AC and he answered that accomplishing this work, setting the agenda and seeing productive outcomes would mark an efficient working day. Rameen referred to the term of "power generation" that signifies young Afghans who are able to receive proper education and set a leading model. He believes that this "power generation" is responsible for the path the Afghan community will take. Concerned about the future of Afghanistan, Rameen expressed that AC can do their work more effectively if it had the means to do so.

Organizational Assessment

Rameen assessed that AC is strong in many areas, yet there were a number of areas which were identified as challenges. The primary recurring themes are outlined as follows:

- AC needs to devote more attention to its external relations. Rameen pointed out that, because of lack of time and staff, not much effort is invested in this area. However, AC appears to be one of the most active Afghan CBOs in the U.S. Every Afghan CBO interviewed, referred us to AC, spoke highly of AC achievements and shared their interest in working with AC. According to AC, its e-mail list reaches 10,000 and mail reach 2,000.

- AC says that financial management is one of their strengths and that the organization keeps its records strictly in order and managed in a timely fashion. Rameen shared that part of the incentive for maintaining meticulous finances comes from the desire to prove that the organization does not associate with terrorists – as funders or as clients. Since September 11th, this has been of particular concern.

- AC's has developed relationships with donors. Most donors' areas of interest include education and community development.

- Fundraising requires more attention. Lack of staff, volunteers and lack of Afghan community involvement are reflected in a lack of fundraising plans.

- A board of directors was not found to be active enough. There is a lack of awareness of the board of director's roles and responsibilities.

- AC lacks long-term staff and volunteers. According to Rameen, new members do not stay long with AC because most have full-time jobs.

- Organizational Leadership: due to a lack of steady staff, Rameen, as Executive Director, is taking many responsibilities on his shoulders. The leadership section of the organizational capacity assessment tool received most of high scores, "5" as functioning satisfactorily and "4" as acceptable with room for improvement.

AC is working to expand linkages with other Afghan CBOs. Such collaboration requires active community participation, and AC has been challenged to engage scattered Afghan community to participate in community development. Most Afghans in America feel no need to create a network in the U.S. Instead, their desire is that most attention should be devoted to help Afghans back in their home country, rebuilding and re-constructing Afghanistan. As a result, Afghans only participate minimally in CBO events geared toward life in the U.S. AC continues to work on expanding further connections with U.S.-based Afghan CBOs with a vision of building a strong Afghan network and unity of the Afghan diaspora.

Action for Self-Reliance Association (ASRELA)

Location: Portland, Maine

Date of visit: April 23, 2006

Participants: Robert Oryem (President), Mary Otto, Wilfred Plalum, Helen Oryem (Board Members, also staff)

Conducted by: Anna Ivantsov, Rachel Nadelman and Sarah Silliman

Coming from the Kiriandongo Refugee Camp in Uganda, the Action for Self-Reliance Association (ASERELA)'s founders felt the need to help people still living in the camp. Founded in 1994, the organization received official 501c3 status in 1997. Managed by 10 volunteer leaders within the U.S., ASERELA employs 13 paid staff in Uganda.

ASERELA's mission is to empower the people of Southern Sudan in refugee camps by helping them connect to existing opportunities and become self-reliant. More recently ASRELA expanded its programming to serve resettled refugees in Maine, helping them to better adjust to their new lives in the U.S. Unable to work within Southern Sudan during the war, since the January 2005 peace agreement, ASERELA has developed plans to extend its work to Southern Sudan, especially for those Uganda-based refugees returning to Sudan.

Previously having partnered with the IRC in Uganda, ASERELA is both pursuing opportunities to partner with IRC in Sudan and president Robert Oryem has applied for a Sudan based IRC program position.

With its primary purpose of helping refugees in Uganda to become self-reliant and improve their living conditions, ASERELA built and maintains a K-6 school for 400 children up to 12 years old in Kiryandongo Camp, Uganda. The school operates successfully and because many refugees still are not ready to return to Sudan, ASERELA is considering constructing a secondary school.

ASERELA works in youth leadership, community building, translation services, cultural issues, cross-cultural assistance and legal assistance. For three years ASERELA offered a successful youth leadership project, but the grant supporting the program was not renewed and their head teacher moved from Maine, so for now the program is on hiatus. Currently, besides producing large fundraising events to support the school in Uganda, ASERELA's Maine-based activities primarily include public speaking about Sudanese cultural and political issues. These public awareness campaigns to non-Sudanese often take place at colleges and cover topics such as the North-South war, current Sudanese politics (including the events in Darfur), the stories of Southern Sudanese refugees in the U.S., and Southern Sudanese cultures and customs.

Before proceeding to the tools, Robert showed us their donated office space at the local Catholic church in Portland, Maine²⁵. Instead of meeting in the office, we gathered at Robert's house to view a short film produced before the school was completed and to learn more about the organization and see visuals of their work in the Uganda camp.

²⁵ see the attached photos

Organizational Assessment

The following points outline the primary issues that ASRELA would like to address, concerning both their work in Uganda as well as their programming in the U.S.

- All members agreed that the U.S. mission has to be revised and clarified, and requires more attention. For example, the strategic plan is poorly developed and needs urgent revision. In Uganda, however, most organizational operations and functions are very well developed and structured.

- Resource management scores revealed a lack of fundraising expertise. The main reason is the under-funded situation, leaving the organization unable to hire staff. However, the organization has identified its donors and keeps good relations with them. The first huge success was its 2001 fund raising event which received publicity and generated \$16,000. This enabled ASERELA to arrange a trip to Africa to build the school for children age 6-12, 399 children in total. ASERELA organizes community events mostly to raise funds to support the Africa program. Use of a mailing list (churches, schools) and holding dinners with African cultural dances also help raise funds.

- Mary Otto is in charge of program management. The organization's program planning appears to be efficient. However, due to lack of funding, some programs are understaffed, e.g. there are not enough teachers in the school ASERELA built in Uganda.

Overall, ASERELA's work has a closer focus on refugees in camps in Uganda than in the U.S. However, both missions lack funding. All U.S. volunteers have other full-time employment, and are able to raise money only to pay staff operating in Uganda. In addition, they have not been able to expand their work into Sudan because, given the current conditions, it has been difficult to find stable, secure partnerships.

Our impression of ASERELA was that there is great cooperation among board members, who dually function as ASERELA staff members. ASERELA services appear to be beneficial to the community and bring awareness of the difficulties people experience in refugee camps in Uganda.

American Society of Afghan Professionals

Location: Alexandria, Virginia

Date of Visit: May 6, 2006

Assessment Participants: Masood Hashimi (Director)

Conducted by: Anna Ivantsov

Founded in 2000, American Society of Afghan Professionals (ASAP) is a non-profit, non-partisan network of Afghan professionals who are committed to empowering Afghan communities in the United States by serving as an information resource and by providing an environment for intellectual and professional growth to the Afghan community. With an emphasis on crucial long-term objectives, ASAP supports a network for all Afghans in the transitional period between immigration and resettlement, where the Afghan community's roots are taking hold in America.

ASAP is involved in aiding the delicate process of Afghanistan's reconstruction by serving as an organization that informs, prepares and develops the Afghan communities in America for service to Afghanistan. ASAP branches in Chicago and Washington, D.C. also serve the Afghan community in the U.S. by raising the collective levels of activism and success among the diaspora.

ASAP has developed cultural and educational programs in the U.S. sponsored by various Afghan businesses, companies and individuals. For example, *First Fridays* presents gatherings of poetry, debate, games, and music for Afghan youth and is famous among Afghans in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. ASAP also offers a tutoring program where once a week, tutors who are qualified college students and professionals from diverse disciplines, spend one-on-one time with younger students ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Masood says that "since ASAP's inception, our tutoring program has been the most successful and rewarding experience for both ASAP members and our students." Tutors work on a variety of academic topics helping students with homework, test preparations, term papers and general school projects. These tutors also assist parents by sharing their overall experience with the American education system, which helps families in finding the right college for their kids.

In order to help Afghan-American community to retain their native language and prepare them for their potential participation in Afghanistan's reconstruction, ASAP organizes Dari and Pashto classes for adults ages 18-35. A health education seminar series is also offered and attracts many Afghans. In collaboration with other Afghan CBOs in the area, ASAP organizes and participates in a number of town hall meetings, fundraising events and different concerts by and for the Afghan community.

ASAP is going through organizational transformation aiming to re-adjust some of the old operating concepts into a new strategic plan. Masood has a strong vision of result-oriented strategies and adds more creativity to ASAP's projects. Masood believes the board of directors has much more potential at this point than it did in 2000.

Today, ASAP membership consists of three types: professional – those holding a four-year bachelor’s degree, a two-year associate degree, or with two years of work experience in a professional field; student - those registered in an accredited college, university, or a vocational school; and honorary members - those individuals or organizations that have the means and/or mechanism to further ASAP’s objectives with the Afghan community. Masood emphasized that existing ASAP members have expressed their desire to expand the scope of services offered by ASAP and are willing to devote more of their efforts into ASAP work.

The first two ASAP directors primarily focused on three goals: 1. Professional development, 2. Education advancement, and 3. Community outreach. With active new board members, Masood is planning to review the organizational mission by exploring new opportunities for ASAP to take.

Organizational Assessment

ASAP identified the following points as strengths and weaknesses of the organization:

- Masood is conducting a review of ASAP’s mission based on the interests of new board members. This could result in new goals for ASAP beyond the original three: 1. Professional development, 2. Education advancement, and 3. Community outreach.
- Strong financial records are kept and professional staff member focus on this area.
- Donors have been clearly identified. Generally, support for ASAP programs consists of: membership fees – 50%, outside funding (private) – 10%, community events – 5%, volunteer support (donations) – 25%.
- Leadership represents the following structure. Staff are represented by all volunteers, ten immigrants and ten resettled refugees. Every three years, ASAP staff members vote to choose a new director. ASAP founder Weis Sherdel held the position of director from 2000 to 2002. From 2003 to 2005, Nadia Aman led the organization. Masood joined ASAP in 2003 and was elected to become ASAP’s third director in 2005. All ASAP members are volunteers, which mean that most of them hold other full-time positions outside of ASAP.
- Program management is strong. Program staff members are trained on how to conduct evaluations. Outreach activities, according to Masood, receive most of the evaluation efforts in ASAP. Collaboration with other Afghan CBO partners has been also established.

Sitting at the Kebab Corner café in Alexandria, Masood and the major issues Afghans face in the U.S. and in Afghanistan were discussed. Photos of Kabul surrounded by mountains hanging on the café walls added a special flavor to our meeting. Masood believes that ASAP is at the stage of making a huge step forward by reviewing its mission and adjusting to meet a new level of demands by the Afghan community of the area. ASAP members express much desire to further advance ASAP by broadening the scope of its work and by creating a better environment for growth.

Congolese Women's Association of New England

Location: Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

Date of visit: April 22, 2006

Assessment Participants: Julie Kabukanyi (President and Founder) and Francine Mudymba (Secretary)

Conducted by: Anna Ivantsov, Rachel Nadelman and Sarah Silliman

The Congolese Women's Association of New England (CWANE) was founded in 2003 by ten resettled Congolese refugees and asylees, all women, from diverse of Congolese tribes and who lived in communities throughout New England. After recognizing that no structure existed to help connect newcomer Congolese women to the services they needed (because of availability and language/cultural obstructions to access), CWANE formed to "create an environment where Congolese women could address and resolve social issues that affected them and their families in the U.S. and the Democratic Republic of Congo." The main issues women identified included housing, daycare and employment. To accomplish this, CWANE operates as information provider, both through one-on-one referrals and through education events, such as conferences and workshops that cover issues identified by women as their most significant concerns. The conferences have included topics like citizenship, children's education, health, adult education, psychological treatment and spiritual life and include Congolese and mainstream service provider guest speakers. In addition to the domestic programming, CWANE has launched fundraising initiatives to support women focused humanitarian and social service work in the DRC. Its first fundraising initiative was a cultural event that raised funds for a clinic that serves rape victims.

Introductory questions helped bring out both CWANE's biggest challenges and its vision for the future. While legally incorporated in Massachusetts, the group is still in the process of applying for 501c3 status which has been challenging because they do not have a sponsoring non-profit. Lacking this status has meant that the organization cannot yet pursue funding opportunities. Julie and Francine shared that they have many ideas, but have had trouble implementing them. They attribute part of this difficulty to lacking an office and paid staff, and while they feel grateful for their committed volunteers, all have full time jobs, families and other commitments that could be preventing the organization's advancement. Even with these difficulties, the group does have a clear vision for the future. Some of their ideas include opening a Congolese women's center that offers programs such as GED, skills training, literacy and ESL, with daycare for women attending classes. In addition to serving adult women, the center will offer after-school programs for teenagers to help handle acculturation problems, helping to reduce the chances of these youngsters getting into trouble and offer official opportunities to connect with Congolese culture while also pursuing cultural adjustment in the U.S.

Currently, CWANE is developing an employment training program, which Julie and Francine hope to develop in less than five years, for women that will connect them to jobs offering adequate wages for those with limited English ability and minimal literacy. Through research, CWANE offers job placement in health positions such as certified nursing assistant and home health aid. Julie explained that because of low-level English, many women in their community work in hotels or in other house keeping positions that involve physically taxing work and lack

potential for advancement. CWANE leaders believe that these health-based careers can offer better income opportunities while women improve their education and language skills.

CWANE now has a proven track record based upon the success of their conferences, but they still do not yet have official 501c3 status nor outside funders. The group prides itself on its participatory processes and the commitment of its leadership. They meet monthly and contribute to CWANE from their own personal funds, but the lack of outside funding has stunted advancement. Despite these challenges, Julie asserted that if the group really were vulnerable to outside forces, it would have collapsed years before.

Organizational Assessment *This is different than the others because it is in a narrative form. We may just want to leave it.

Based on the assessment, CWANE identified the following topics as main areas to be addressed:

-While answering the questions separately by hand, discussions showed that Julie and Francine had consistently evaluated their operations similarly and approached conversations with respect and interest the few times they disagreed. While surprising us with high rankings for many areas even in light of their early stages of operations, they both usually offered illustrative explanations of why they had chosen specific numbers as well as could highlight areas in need of improvement. The women shared their pride in both their internal and external relations, explaining that the strong relationships within the organizational leadership, community members and partner organizations have led to successful activities. However, much relationship building must be informal because it takes place either during time “borrowed” from their official jobs or outside of work hours.

-Even without outside funding or program income, the organization engages in official budget processes (with input from all board members and management by the treasurer and Julie) supported by financial contributions from the eight currently active board members. At the monthly board meeting, members contribute a regulated amount that support day-to-day activities and increase these inputs when CWANE produces special events. For conferences and workshops, the CWANE financial team will draft a budget and divide it among themselves to make sure the minimal financial goal can be reached. If members cannot pay during a given month or for a special event, the organization allows for extended payment plans. Budgeting does not take place annually but on an ongoing basis as events are being planned.

-Just as relationship building/maintenance and budgeting processes take place on an informal schedule, so does evaluation. All events are followed by internal evaluative discussions, but the organization has never implemented formal indicators to judge program achievement.

The student team was impressed by CWANE’s vision, dedication, event successes (conferences and medical fundraising initiative for Congo), and inter-leadership relationships. The organization stands out for several reasons: CWANE is the only group interviewed across all six populations that focuses on women’s unique needs; the organization values and implements participatory practices; and, the leadership has made a priority of maintaining diverse ethnic leadership. CWANE’s highly rated self assessment could be taken as hopeful rather than

unrealistic, and some of this could change once they obtain 501c3 status. Even though CWANE is far newer and offers fewer programs than other Congolese groups interviewed, we believe that with its unique focus on women, practical vision for improved refugee/aslyee livelihoods and its strong commitment leadership makes the organization one with which IRC should collaborate.

Nah We Yone, Inc.

Location: New York, New York

Date of Visit: May 5, 2006

Assessment Participants: Leslie Rickford (Program Coordinator)

Conducted by: Sarah Silliman

Nah We Yone, Inc. was founded in 1997 in response to war in Sierra Leone and the resulting impact upon Sierra Leoneans that had come to the U.S. From serving the homeless to the growing numbers of people in detention centers, founders of Nah We Yone began an informal network to support Sierra Leoneans in need. Soon, through word of mouth, the organization grew as a resource center for African immigrants.

The nature of the conflict in the West African region impacted the programming of Nah We Yone, and within a few years of establishment the organization changed its mission statement to include African immigrants and refugees from West Africa, including Liberians, Ivoirians, and Guineans. Now Nah We Yone serves roughly 50% Sierra Leoneans and 50% Pan Africans.

Nah We Yone's programming is split in two areas, social services and the "Nah We Yone Family" program. Among the social services provided are psychological counseling (in partnership with Harlem Hospital, Bellvue, and the NYU Program for Survivors of Torture), support groups (including an adolescent girls group and a women's wellness group), referrals and support for housing, food, education and additional individual and community needs such as legal and employment referrals. The "Nah We Yone Family" program consists of monthly informational meetings (providing information on issues such as health, taxes, social services, college prep, etc.), a "family" brunch every-other month where all members from the board to clients come together to share food and music, a yearly youth camp, and a volunteer program that provides tutoring, college mentoring, driving, translating and other support services to the Nah We Yone family.

Nah We Yone focuses primarily on the New York area because their funding is local. Some linkages back to Sierra Leone also exist. Nah We Yone has a yearly call for goods to be shipped to Sierra Leone. It chose a charity to donate the goods each year and receive correspondence on occasion from additional NGOs in the country for which they network in order to help meet the needs of local organizations.

Although Nah We Yone has avoided the challenge of "mission creep" they still face a number of issues. For one, despite the fact that they recently acquired additional office space, it has outgrown its current office space and considering relocation. In addition, Nah We Yone is funded for just one more year with the New York Foundation, and despite attempts to attain

more funding sources, such as those derived from grants for advocacy, it has yet to diversify its funding source.

During the assessment, Nah We Yone identified that staff has successfully avoided the danger of diversifying too soon, recognized in the research as “mission creep”, yet there are a number of things that Nah We Yone still needs to develop for formalization of the organization. Many of these areas have been recognized and will be discussed further in the following section.

Organizational Assessment

While a number of areas that have been identified internally as areas for improvement, these systems and protocols have yet to be completely developed. Therefore the main areas identified for improvement are highlighted below.

-Within the past year Nah We Yone has adjusted the leadership to include an Executive Director who is now responsible for areas such as fundraising, developing annual budgets, strengthening human resource management and policies, establishing collaborations and coalitions, creating evaluation systems, and strengthening the civic engagement and advocacy portions of Nah We Yone’s work.

-Board development, like many other organizations, is an area where Nah We Yone has also identified as needing improvement. They seek to improve and have highlighted a number of areas which have not yet fully been addressed. Such issues include the development of an advisory committee and recruiting a CPA board member to assist in some of the financial and budgetary reporting.

While Nah We Yone’s support staff is small, with two full-time staff, two part-time staff and three volunteers, it is able to efficiently carry out a number of programs that could serve the needs of the community. It has also been able to secure local funding, gain recognition for its work (it won the Union Square Award in 2004 for its work in the community) and establish partnerships to enhance its programming. Despite these gains, the staff are still working to secure new and sustained funding. For example, the organization’s major funding has one more year remaining and they recently were denied a grant to enhance their advocacy work because they failed to adequately demonstrate their experience in the area. In addition to funding, Nah We Yone is also working to develop its systems and structures in an effort to formalize its processes and prepare itself for expansion and development. Nah We Yone is an excellent example of how in just a few years, good ideas and the intentions of a few community members can develop into a fully operational organization supporting both the physical and spiritual needs of the community.

Fondation Shalupe

Location: Braintree, Massachusetts

Date of visit: April 22, 2006

Assessment Participants: Jeanne Kasongo Ngondo (Founder), Mea **last name** and Musunda Bundu (Coordinators)

Conducted by: Anna Ivantsov, Rachel Nadelman and Sarah Silliman

In 2000, Foundation Shalupe was established in response to the desperate need of the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and since has expanded its efforts to the Boston area because the founders recognized the growing need in the resettled community. In addition to its main office in Kinshasa, Shalupe also has a branch office in France.

Both in the Congo and the U.S., Shalupe's overall goal is to support Congolese to become self-sufficient, empowered actors in the society in which they reside. This shared goal was reflected in the organizational assessment opening question, "What is it that you most enjoy about your work?" Jeanne said that the part she enjoys most is to help people become self-sufficient. Masunda hopes to help empower people to be capable members of society so they in turn can assist other community members. Mea enjoys seeing people advance from a place of disadvantage and become successful and self-sufficient.

Among Shalupe's projects in the Congo are a hospital – first to support the hospital itself, and now the patients as well (assistance in education, move to the U.S., etc). In addition, in Congo Shalupe provides homeless shelter, HIV/AIDS education, financial services for businesses, and general assistance to IDPs, orphans, and other war victims.

In the U.S., Shalupe provides legal assistance to refugees and asylees, acting as a resource center for medical needs, assisting in employment, and general assistance in the resettlement and adjustment process. The organization has collaborated with the Pair Project, a group providing pro-bono legal assistance to immigrants and refugees, and with their local church. With these groups Shalupe has been able to support four refugees to come to the U.S. and attain legal status and education. (One is now in school in Florida, two still live with them and will soon be in college, and one, tragically, was shot and killed last year in Boston). Referrals are taken from the church and then the pastor is contacted to find a family to take them in and help them get on their feet. It is only those that are not able to be placed in other families that Jeanne and Mea take in.

The organization has a two-sided operation, refugee referrals and assistance in the U.S. and support to homeless and orphaned children in the Congo, but it has not adapted the organization to fit this two-pronged approach. This has clearly become an issue in nearly all aspects of the organization and surfaced consistently as we spoke about the organization using the assessment tools.

The organization identified major challenges that it faces both in the Congo and the U.S., primarily because Shalupe does not have the means to carry out all of the work it would like to take on. It is in the emerging stage of growth in the U.S., with no funding, no paid staff and no secured partnerships. Shalupe strives to be effective and is challenged not to be distracted by the vast needs of the community, but create a focused, long-term strategic plan that will guide their work and ensure pointed impact.

Organizational Assessment

Shalupe identified organizational areas that could use improvement, such as partnership building, creating management and communication systems, and strategic planning.

-It was clear that Foundation Shalupe has entered a transition period as a result of expanding programs from its work in the DRC and in the U.S as well. Because the needs of the communities in the U.S. are quite different from those in the DRC, one challenge that has arisen is the need to renew the mission statement and strategic plan to reflect these two different areas of operations.

-U.S. programs need work on vision and planning, and the organization could benefit from assistance and technical support in areas such as leadership training, management and budgetary development. Jeanne recognized the need for more attention to these areas, but pointed out that they have come a long way already in a short period of time. As Masunda put it, “Shalupe is at the point that it is a little baby walking, with great potential [to grow strong].”

-Despite programming challenges, Shalupe has successfully met the needs of many people in the Congo and in the U.S. The organization has a vision and a number of goals for the future.

The organizational assessment process seemed to help Shalupe highlight areas they may need to focus on. Some of the issues Shalupe is struggling with have to do with the lack of support from members. As Shalupe leaders continue to work, it is their hope to secure some support to concretize their goals²⁶.

Southern Sudanese Organization

Location: Lynn, Massachusetts

Date of visit: April 24, 2006

Assessment Participants: James Mudaki (President and Founder), Franco Majok (Action Chairperson, Board Member and Volunteer), Lual Mayum (Social and Outreach Worker)

Conducted by: Rachel Nadelman

The Southern Sudanese Organization (SSO), founded by ten Southern Sudanese resettled refugees, formed to facilitate the resettlement and integration of Southern Sudanese refugees and asylees in Massachusetts. The founding group felt that while Massachusetts did offer certain refugee services, the specific Sudanese background from which many refugees came (rural, illiterate, victims of conflict – especially women, little to no formal education) was very different than other refugee groups. Services designed specifically for this community were needed in order to help Sudanese refugees. As of now all efforts are focused on Massachusetts; and SSO provides social and referral services including translation, citizenship, immigration, employment,

²⁶ Upset because they knew that the discord between the assessment participants did not give offer a strong impression of the organization’s operations, two board members who had not been able to attend the participation, Edo and Mirielle, sent us their assessments electronically. Both graded operations as very strong, using mostly 4 and 5s, but unfortunately they did not accompany the numbers with written explanations so we do not have a better idea of why the group is actually stronger than it seemed to be during the in-person assessment.

education, health and youth programming. SSO receives sufficient funding to employ two part-time employees (James and Lual) but still depends on active volunteers to administer programming. The group is interested in pursuing linkages to Sudan in the future, but only on several conditions: their domestic programs are strong enough to withstand the diversion of focus; they find reliable partners in Sudan; and either their primary funder or new funders offer support for linkages to Southern Sudan. SSO regularly collaborates with the Boston-based IRC resettlement office, mostly through referrals of Southern Sudanese clients.

SSO is unique because at its inception it became part of the Massachusetts Mutual Assistance Coalition, a collaborative network of eight immigrant-run support organizations (which include other refugee communities, such as Somali and Bosnian). This coalition receives support from the state agency, the Organization for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI), which obtains federal funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). As part of their ORI grant, these groups rent subsidized office spaces side by side in a building in Lynn, share an administrative assistant (for whom a portion of the ORI grant is allotted), often serve each others' clients and collaborate together on funding proposals, public awareness campaigns and other social service programs.

Before beginning the organizational assessment, James introduced me to several leaders of the Coalition group, and the interaction among them showed the camaraderie across the organizations. Some examples of their collaboration include Southern Sudanese regularly participating in Somali ESL classes and other groups' clients attending SSO-sponsored health workshops (past topics include diabetes, HIV/AIDS and domestic violence).

Franco explained that all staff, volunteers and board clearly understand what others do, operate with good communication and a productive sharing of responsibility, and do not make decisions without including others. James added that while the group functions well, the leadership would like to expand offerings. He imagines that SSO could become a more established liaison to resettlement agencies for Sudanese (not only Southern). In addition, while he appreciates the Mutual Assistance Coalition's referral system, James imagines that instead of referring clients to the Somali ESL program, which has limited capacity, SSO could broaden activities and begin its own ESL and job training programs. Lual pointed out (with James and Franco agreeing) that SSO also offers strong programs which are well organized and goal oriented. All three members recognize they lack fundraising training that could help them effectively pursue additional private and public funding.

Organizational Assessment

For the most part, James, Franco and Lual agreed with each others' responses. They ranked many activities highly with "4" or "5" - and provided concrete examples of how the organization strongly implemented its programs and activities. Primarily because of standards set by its funder, ORI, SSO has implemented advanced administrative systems and mechanisms for organizational and program evaluation.

SSO acknowledged its organizational areas requiring most improvement is resource development because the organization is dependent on a single donor. SSO has a fundraising plan but it lack the knowledge of how to adequately implement it, does not have staff with fundraising

knowledge, and is not sure how to plan and implement fundraising events. SSO also recognizes that it needs improvement in public relations. The organization lacks a website and has minimal solicitation materials on hand. While emphasizing that its leadership could use better technical training, James mentioned how an IRC leadership development training he attended had made a significant difference in service provision. Two areas identified as those of greatest assistance include lessons on how to identify organizational areas needing strengthening, and leveraging government policies and programs such as the No Child Left Behind Act. SSO would also like to create mechanisms to actively involve children in its community.

Due to limited time, the assessment was conducted aloud. Three member of the organization participated, James, Franco and Lual. On most areas, James and Fraco were in agreement. Lual, perhaps as a newly hired staff member, deferred to the two senior members.

The organization's ability to provide illustrative examples of how and why its programs effectively operate, the manner that the three staff members responded to questions, and a demonstrated self-awareness of weak areas, makes the organization worthy of collaboration with IRC. In addition, SSO's unique placement as part of the Mutual Assistance Coalition not only demonstrates a productive example of grassroots organizational collaboration but has provided the organization with training in collaboration and forming effective partnerships..

Collaborations and Linkages

The following organizations operate in refugees' home countries and/or in refugee camps in a third country. Some have offered programs for some time, while others are just beginning. These organizations typically have one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Started with the mission to serve the home country population and have not expanded to serve populations in the U.S.
2. Started with the mission to serve the home country population and have expanded to serve populations in the U.S.
3. Started with the mission to serve the diaspora and have begun projects in the home country as development/reconstruction projects.

For details and contact information for any of the organizations below, please see section IV. Community-Based Organization Database.

Afghan

Afghan Communicator (AC) - Queens, New York

- AC is a rich-resource information center and a link between the Afghan community and the larger U.S. community. AC has strong connections with most U.S.-based Afghan CBOs and maintains an office in Kabul to distribute aid from the West directly to charities of donors' choice. AC also runs a low budget guesthouse for travelers inside Afghanistan.

American Society of Afghan Professionals (ASAP) - Alexandria, Virginia

- ASAP represent a network of professionals committed to empowering U.S.-based Afghans by advocating for their concerns, sharing resources through peer networking, and organizing professional seminars and educational programs. ASAP helps Afghanistan's reconstruction by serving as an organization that informs, prepares and develops the Afghan communities in America for their service to Afghanistan.

Afghan Friends Network (AFN) - California

- AFN facilitates friendships, networks, and partnerships between organizations and cities in the U.S. and Afghanistan by organizing cultural, spiritual and technical exchange that enriches the lives of all participants.

Afghan Relief Organization (ARO) - California

- Founded in 1998 in the U.S. and registered in both the U.S. and in Afghanistan, ARO works on issues of humanitarian relief and education on the ground in Afghanistan. ARO maintains an educational center in Kabul.

Afghan Coalition (AC) - California

- AC is an umbrella organization, currently encompassing nine Member Organizations, and three internal departments. Following the September 11th tragedy, AC founded the Afghan Resource Center, to address the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Afghan American Youth Council (AAYA) - California

- AAYA's goal is to create a leadership of US-based Afghans in order to establish contacts with youth inside and outside of Afghanistan promoting cooperation and mutual assistance.

Help the Afghan Children (HTACHI) -Virginia

- HTACI is grassroots, non-profit, non-partisan organization, dedicated to helping Afghan children. Through fund raising activities in the US-based Afghan community and abroad, HTACI establishes and operates several primary health care clinics, educational and vocational training centers and home-based education programs in Afghanistan, also delivering humanitarian emergency aid to different cities of Afghanistan.

Burmese

National Burma Action Committee New York (NBACNY) –New York

- NBACNY is a non-profit organization with a primary goal to bring down the military regime and to restore democracy in Burma. Organizing demonstrations, protests and rallies, testifying against business ventures with Burma, NBANY attempt to advocate for Burma's oppressed citizens. NBACNY raises funds for donations towards exiled students along the Burma/Thai border. NBACNY also advocates for Burma-based non-profit organizations.

The United States Campaign for Burma (USCB) -Washington, D.C.

- Through public education, leadership development initiatives, conferences, and advocacy campaigns at local, national and international levels, USCB works to unite Americans and Burmese dissidents-in-exile to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights in Burma and raise awareness about human rights violations committed by Burma's military regime. The strength of USCB — individual members, community chapters, student chapters, and affiliates across the United States — is Americans and Burmese dissidents-in-exile.

Free Burma Coalition (FBC) - North Carolina

- FBC is another umbrella organization which interacts and engages with Burma by encouraging travel and tourism, educational and cultural exchange, development activities aimed to support people's livelihoods, institutional and capacity building, and humanitarian assistance. Since 2003, taking a 180 degree turn, the coalition questions openly the effectiveness of Western sanctions and isolation as a way of fostering democratization and open society in Burma.

Burmese Youth Project (BYP) - Colorado

- Being the aid organization, BYP raising funds in the US in order to primarily offer vocational trainings to young refugees in Burma or in Thailand with a goal to teach

youngsters employable skills, so that in case they find work either as illegals in Thailand or repatriated to Burma, they would be seen as valuable instead of exploitable.

Foundation for the People of Burma (FPB) - California

- FPB's mission is to provide humanitarian aid to Burmese people of all ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs, responding to the basic needs of communities, supporting locally run projects in the following general areas: health, education, and leadership development in Thailand and Burma.

Under The Burma American Democratic Alliance:

Burma Association, California

- Burma Association's main mission is to work towards a democratic Burma in which democratic principles and human rights are well respected and expand collaborations with other groups in San Francisco Bay Area for social welfare of local Burmese people.

Bay Area Burma Roundtable (BABR), California

- BABR hold monthly meetings gathering American and Burmese activists around the Bay Area where project on how to obtain support of elected city officials, university administrations and the greater public for the Free Burma movement are developed. BABR also works to pressure American business companies working in Burma for being more attentive to political situation in the country.

The Burma Humanitarian Mission (BHM), California

- BHM is committed to providing urgently needed medical supplies to internally displaced people in Burma which includes variety of services: preventative medicine, midwifery, pediatric care, and trauma-oriented medical care.

Burmese American Women's Alliance (BAWA), California

- Besides US-based services such as help new Burmese to adapt to American society quickly and successfully, BAWA is also providing services to Burmese women and children in Burma and also to those stranded in the border area.

Burma Relief, California

- Burma Relief was founded since 1996 with a primary goal of to provide humanities aid to Burmese refugees at Thai Burma Border. Burma Relief organizes various fund raising events and sends the money to the refugees.

The Burma Fund - Washington, D.C.

- TBF supports those who are building Burma's civil institutions by providing analysis and experience for activists to guide the transition and development process in Burma. TBF programs facilitate inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic dialogue on resolving governance issues of mutual concern by providing a forum for discussion. Other TBF activities include extensive training and exposure, mentoring and placement for interns who are willing to enhance their skills, knowledge and professional experience of a struggle in Burma.

Congolese

The African Salvation Group (ASG) – New York

- An immigrant health service provider in the U.S. ASG concentrates all international efforts in Kinshasa, DRC. Targeting vulnerable populations, particularly women and children, ASG's core programs focus on health and capacity building. Projects include: infectious disease prevention and education (HIV/AIDS, STDs & TB); counseling, testing and referral services; public outreach; nutrition and food security; and community capacity-building through education and skills training.

AMANI: Society of Justice and Charity – Illinois

- A refugee/aslyee support organization for French speakers started in 1997, AMANI's projects in Congo focus on supporting orphans. Until recently, AMANI provided strong Congo-based programming, including running a pig farm to provide food and resources for the youth and covering school fees for 100 children. Because of funding cuts and looting of the pigs by soldiers, AMANI now only provides monthly nutritional meals.

Fondation Shalupe – Massachusetts

- Fondation Shalupe provides HIV/AIDS prevention, micro-credit small business programs for homeless youth and street workers, university scholarships, resettlement for those internally displaced by the war and computer training in partnership with international aid organizations like UNHCR and USAID. U.S. programming is just beginning and includes legal, health, education and shelter assistance for asylum seekers. .

Federation des Congolais de l'Etranger – Washington, D.C. (U.S. branch)

- La Federation des Congolais de l'Etranger started in order to coordinate the Congolese diaspora for financial, advocacy and humanitarian work and has offices in the U.S., Belgium and Congo. *Financial efforts*: recruiting foreign investment in local agricultural business, organizing remittances to go through Central Bank. *Advocacy*: lobbying governments of diaspora communities for greater involvement in strengthening Congo. *Humanitarian*: Donating hospital equipment and organizing teacher corps that volunteers to teach short-term in Kinshasa Universities for free.

Leja Bulela –Michigan

- Started in 1993 to improve health and education services for the conflict ridden Eastern Kasai province, Leja Bulela has organized many projects including providing tents, medical equipment and school supplies, establishing scholarship fund and financing potable water pump. Currently the organization is constructing a health center primarily for internally displaced people, with all funding from U.S.-based Congolese. In the U.S., besides fundraising, Leja Bulela runs cultural awareness programs for children.

Liberian

African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA) – Pennsylvania

- In addition to ACANA's work and collaborations with other Liberian and African NGOs in the U.S., ACANA has also established an NGO in Liberia with the intention to start education programs in English and technical training.

Imani House, Inc. – New York

- Imani House began in Liberia supporting the literacy needs of adults and children. Beginning in 1990, Imani House began to work supporting hospitals and disease prevention in addition to providing emergency relief to victims of war. Imani House works with the International Foundation for Self-Help, Plenty International, the UN and other international donors and institutions.

Liberian Mandingo Association of New York (LIMANY) – New York

- LIMANY provides scholarships, school supplies and other goods to refugees, IDPs and other victims of war in Liberia and in refugee camps in Guinea. In the U.S. they collaborate with ACANA and the Mandingo caucus, and in Liberia they work with both public and private (religious and non) schools.

Tappita District Development Association (TADDA) – Minneapolis

- TADDA provides scholarships to high school and college students in the Tappita District of Nimba County in Liberia. In addition, they are working on the construction and rehabilitation of the primary high school in the district and providing school supplies, constructing a library and radio station.

United Nimba Citizens Council (UNICCO) – Georgia

- UNICCO works to serve Nimba County citizens in Liberia and across the diaspora. UNICCO primarily provide support for the development of the county, with projects providing books and school supplies, health and medical assistance, educational scholarships and clothing and other support to IDPs. UNICCO has member chapters in 14 U.S. states and works with the Organization of All Liberians in MN, the local schools, but they would like to extend their collaborations to work more with the religious institutions in the U.S. and in Liberia.

Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) – Washington, D.C.

- The primary purpose of ULAA is to link Liberian organizations and initiatives across the Americas. ULAA has 18 chapter organizations within the U.S. and collaborate with Friends of Liberia, the Rhode Island Peace Mission and members of the U.S. Congress.

Sierra Leonean

Koinadugu Descendent Organization (KDO) – Maryland

- KDO works to crease a one-stop service center in the district of Koinadugu which will provide pre-school education, vocational training, a library, a carpentry shop as well as a place for social interaction and recreation. KDO collaborates with its 5 branch members as well as with local chiefs, councils and NGOs in the county.

Organization for the Advancement of Literacy (OFAL) – Washington, D.C.

- OFAL has provided scholarships, school books and supplies, and clothing to displaced children in Sierra Leone. OFAL is simultaneously creating a computer literacy and job-training center in Freetown and in D.C.

Save Heritage and Rehabilitate the Environment (SHARE) – Maryland

- During the conflict SHARE provided supplies, food, clothing and emergency relief to IDPs and other victims of war in Sierra Leone. SHARE also has educational and advocacy programs for the population in general. SHARE collaborates with Handicap International, International Campaign Against Landmines Canada, and local organizations such as Forum for Democratic Initiatives, the Sierra Leonean Red Cross, Green Scenery, and the National Democratic Initiative Forum.

Sierra Visions – Maryland

- Sierra Visions fosters social reform and economic development in Sierra Leone through public/private educational partnerships in technology, tourism, trade, training, and transportation. Sierra Visions works with its members in the U.S., U.K., and Sierra Leone.

UJIMA for Africa Development (UJIMA) – California

- UJIMA works on development projects in Sierra Leone including disease prevention initiatives, the construction of a community center, and cultural exchange programs with youth from the U.S. and Sierra Leone. UJIMA collaborates with the Bumpah chiefdom in Sierra Leone.

Southern Sudanese

Action for Self Reliance Association (ASERELA) – Maine

- ASERELA built and now administers a K-6 school in the Ugandan Kiryandongo refugee camp with both U.S. self-raised funds from and in collaboration with international NGOs like UNHCR and the IRC. Now the CBO would like to build a secondary school in Kiryandongo and a technical training center in Southern Sudan.

Cush Community Relief International – Nebraska

Started as the humanitarian branch of a Sudanese Church in Omaha, Cush Community Relief pursues development projects in the areas of: education (health and academic); agriculture; water and sanitation; and transportation. Cush currently is receiving support from USAID to investigate a possible water and education project in Southern Sudan.

Sudan-American Foundation for Education, Inc (SAFE) – Virginia

- SAFE works to improve educational opportunities for children throughout Sudan primarily by collecting books and starting libraries. Secondarily SAFE supports university scholarships for women with preference to Southern Sudanese or Darfuri students.

IV. APPENDIX

a. Project Description

b. Terms of Reference

c. U.S.-Based Refugee Community Organization Database

d. Survey Template

e. Surveys (included in separate document)