

# **Economy Empowerment of Liberian Immigrants Through Basic Life Skills: Concord, New Hampshire**

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## I. Community Context

### I. A Community Profile

Figure 2. Map of Liberia (The Women of Fire, 2009)



This study is about American Liberians who have recently come to the United States as refugees from Africa. Their original home was the Republic of Liberia located on the west coast of Africa.

It is a small country that shares borders with Ivory Coast,

Guinea, Sierra, and the Atlantic Ocean. According to Columbia University Press the “population is 3,482,000, spread over 43,000 square miles” (Liberia, 2009). The capital city is Monrovia, which was named after the fifth president of United States, James Monroe. The history of Liberia is unique because the country was not colonized by any European colonial power. It was founded as a colony by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1821 to 1822, and was created for free slaves to settle in Africa where they could enjoy their freedom and equality. In 1847, Liberia was established as the Republic of Liberia forming its own government (Liberia, 2009). In 1990, the country emerged into civil war led by Charles Taylor, which resulted in hundreds of thousands dead, more wounded and set back to the country’s economy and infrastructure developments. However, presently the country is climbing the economic ladder under the leadership of the first female President in Africa, a highly educated, Harvard University graduate, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who inspired many others most especially international donors.

Demographic Characteristics: According to the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP), New Hampshire has welcomed many Liberian refugees from 1997 to

2007. The resettled Liberian refugees number approximately 243 people (NHOEP, 2008). The official language in the Republic of Liberia is English. Those who speak Standard English are those who obtained a solid education in the schools. But most people speak Liberian street English which is called “Pidgin English.” Many Liberian refugees, who were resettled here in New Hampshire, come from tribal groups of Krahn, Bassa, Vai, Loma (and at least two Mandingoes families).

At the time of this study, most of the family heads are between 25 to 62 years of age, with two to five children per family between the ages of 0 to 18. One hundred percent of Liberian refugees’ children are currently in school. But only 2 percent are high school drop outs. Most of the Liberian refugees came to New Hampshire as single parent as a result of the civil war. The female population is approximately 80 percent and males are about 20 percent out of the 243 Liberian refugees that were resettled in the Granite State. Since their arrival, the Liberian community has grown every year with new born babies, and other Liberians have migrated from other states within the United States, to connect with their family members and loved ones.

Figure 3. Map of New Hampshire (The Heart of New England, n.d)



## Refugee and Asylee Admissions

The Federation for American Immigration reform stated

that “The United States has resettled almost 762,400 refugees in excess of the most recent ten fiscal years (FY’97-06) for permanent resettlement. Moreover, “asylum admittance, that was restricted at 10,000 per year, has been opened and includes an additional 216,800 entrances over this time. This is an average of nearly 98,000 refugees and

asylees per year. Below is the data from Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)”.

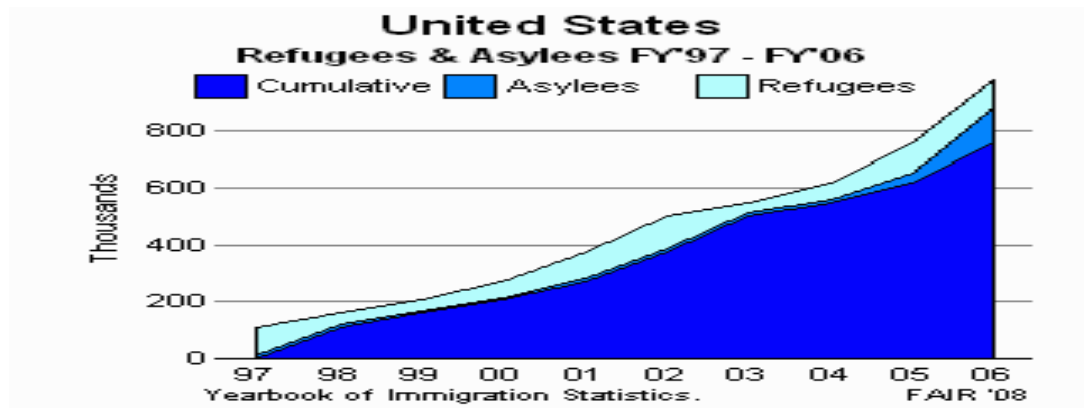


Table 1. Source: (Statistic from Federation for American Immigration Reform. (FAIR, 2008))

## B. Community needs assessment

In-depth interviews were conducted with all actors involved in the refugee resettlement process. These actors included community members, community leaders, Lutheran Social Services, International Institute of Manchester, volunteers, and Catholic Charities. It appeared that the refugees and immigrants residing in New Hampshire needed the following to ease their resettlement process so that they would be able to become more productive and self sufficient in the community

- Public transportation
- Full-time jobs
- Access to and more time for ESL classes
- Interpreters
- Affordable housing
- Medical insurance
- Less isolation of women to due to the cost of child care
- Resume building



- Professional qualifications or certification.
- Technology training
- After-school program activities

With these needs, the Liberian community and the entire refugee community will be vulnerable to low living standards and poor quality of health care and even to depression as well as dependency on the federal government, which will also encourage more refugee and immigrant communities to relocate to another state within the United States for more variety of opportunities. As the cost of becoming a United States citizen is rising every year, some community members proposed to make the easy pathway to citizenship which is getting too costly for them to afford.

The community needs assessment determined that most of the refugees are concerned about the future of their children because some of them live in bad neighborhoods, where the children get involved with bad friends who might influence them. Therefore, it was agreed by some community leaders to create an after-school program so that they will be engaged in interesting activities rather than hanging out with bad friends in the community who will get them into trouble.

According to Cathy Chesly, Director of Immigration and Refugees Services at New Hampshire Catholic Charities, the major challenges most Africans face is illiteracy and a language barrier to the integration process within the community. She continued to say that there are services available for refugees, which include food stamps and Medicaid as well as cash assistance until they find a job. Once a job is found, the benefits will be cut off automatically. But, finding jobs during the present economic downturn is a significant issue for resettlement agencies as well the refugee themselves.

Overall, it seems that the refugee and immigrant community needs public transportation, and professional certification programs for them to advance in their careers. The benefits period should also be extended, if they do not find jobs within the time frame set by the resettlement agencies, as well as giving more time for ESL classes so that they are able to

read and write correctly and to be able to use technology. Not only technology skills are needed, but also to have skills that will make them more marketable in the community.

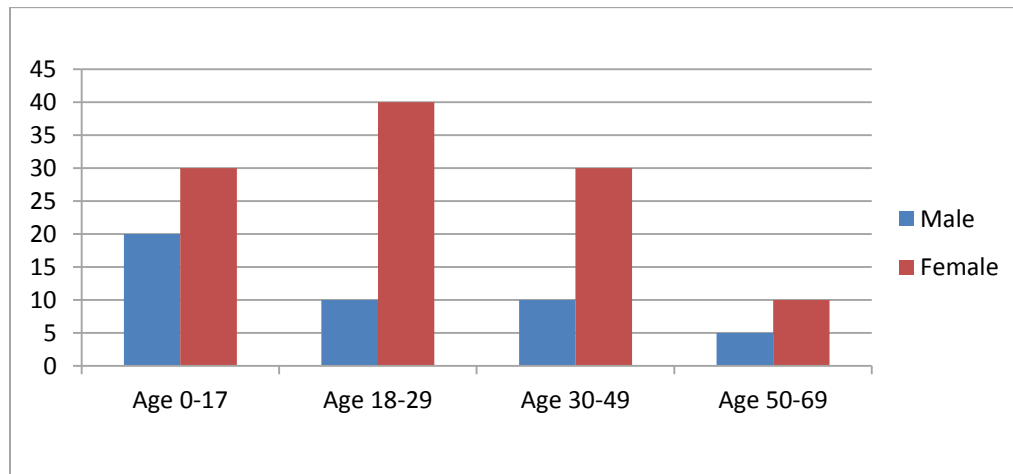
### **C. Target Population**

This study is focused on the prospective American-Liberian who arrived in New Hampshire as refugees from their native country Liberia because of civil war. Many of these Liberian refugees were resettled in New Hampshire by area agencies such as Lutheran Social Services of Concord and International Institute of Manchester. The intent was to have those resettled refugees rebuild their lives as envisioned by the American Dream, provided they make better use of the opportunities in United States. Liberia, having being an English speaking country, enables many of the Liberian to have an initial English background even though the majority spoke Liberian street English called in Liberia “sour English” or Jargon. But, now living in the Concord and Manchester areas of New Hampshire, United States, the poverty rate and dependency on the federal government for support among the Liberian single parents has been a dominant factor in the community.

According to a personal communication with Lutheran Social Services Director Amy Marchildon, most of the Liberian Refugees who resettled in the Concord area were single parents. Along with this issue of single parents, there is also another barrier to economic sufficiency, which is illiteracy such as basic reading, writing and computer skills. These are the leading barriers to integration into the workforce and main difficulty keeping an entry-level job.

These issues exist in the community and it will be necessary to target all the family heads for long- term economic sustainability. In doing so, programs such as baby sitting for children aged 0 to 8 needed to be provided for the mothers to be effective and engaged in the project.

**Table 2.** Age and Gender Distribution of Liberians in New Hampshire



Through interviews with two prominent Liberian community leaders, Sekou Sheriff and Brown Massaquoi, it appeared that about 20 percent of the adult population in the Liberian community in New Hampshire completed high school. The rest of the 80 percent did not because of civil war and other reasons such as they could not afford it and gender differences. In addition, it seemed that only 3 to 5 percent of adults have bachelors' degrees from renowned colleges and universities here in the United States and about 5 to 10 percent are still enrolled in colleges and professional training certification program such as Licensed Nurse's Assistance (LNA) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) as well as Registered Nursing (RN). Mr. Massaquoi stressed that most of the Liberians wants to further their studies to at-least obtain certification so that they will be marketable and boost their yearly incomes. But due to job requirements and children, they are unable to pursue further education.

**Social Characteristics:** The Liberian refugee's community has more social freedom here in the United States than their own country because every person in the United States has freedom of expression, and is free from abuse and exploitation. In the Republic of Liberia, men have the final decisions in the household, and contribute to all the necessary expenditures so that the family will not be left hungry. Women are usually stay-at-home

mothers, but can also contribute to support the family if the head of the household is unable to. In the United States, it is totally different in that both the husband and wife often work to support the household. Women are free from abuse, exploitation and participate in any religious or social organizations. Women also have everything they need to support themselves, because they have jobs and have equal social rights with their husbands. Here in the United States, there are more opportunities to grow than back home in Liberia.

Through interviews with some Liberian women, it was perceived that they have social freedom here simply because the United States has social amenities to offer to them such as a welfare system based on their household income. Some say, despite that fact, they are always busy working including extra hours to make ends meet. However, they still get some help with their children through the State of New Hampshire. They are getting a high school education through The No Child Left Behind Policy which is good for their future. Some even said that they themselves did not go to school, but at least, in America their children are obtaining the solid education that they did not have. “We were denied the opportunity to attend schools because our parents did not have the means to support girls’ schooling (Anonymous responded, October 28, 2009).

The social needs of the Liberian community include an after-school program for the children as well as solution to the problem of being placed in bad neighborhoods, where their children are mingled with bad friends that are making them smoke and drink which has the parents concerned. Moreover, there is need for public transportation. Another issue that was addressed during face-to-face conversations with some older women was that they did not possess valid drivers’ licenses because of illiteracy. They wished New Hampshire would have adequate public transportation so that they could move around without waiting on others, when schedules are not same. Through a thorough examination and need assessment of the community, it appeared that this community needs education and specialization to build capacity so that life will improve and dependency on the federal government will be less as well.

**Economic Characteristics:** For economic reasons, nearly everyone would want to migrate from the poor countries to the United States. Most of the Liberian community was resettled here in New Hampshire because of the civil war that made them flee their country. However, coming to United States was a dream for most of them. According to one of the community leaders Mr. Brown Massaquoi. “They are able to make ends meet, through jobs and 90 percent of the Liberian community is either working part-time or full-time and seasonal temporary jobs in order to survive. But, the yearly income is not enough to support a single parent with two to five dependents. However some had bought houses, with the intention of reselling them in the future for profit and move to bigger ones. But, the recession devastated their plans which resulted in them foreclosing the mortgages they had.

Furthermore, through interviews and survey, it was found out that 90 percent of the Liberians make between \$8 to \$20 thousands a year with two to five children as dependents and get government assistance because they fall under the poverty line. The remaining 10 percent make up to \$22 to \$30 thousands a year. However, they must work extra hours to reach that amount a year. Yet, if they were back home in Liberia, there would be limited opportunities for them to have all those amenities. Liberian women here in the United States are able to contribute towards household expenses, have bank accounts in their own names, are able to save some money, and even send some money to their siblings and other relations back in Liberia. Economically, some are better off here in the United States because they are able to make ends meet. However, some improvement needs to be made such as providing adult professional training program for those who need it or fall below the poverty line to obtain some skills and specialization to better themselves economically. Furthermore, some of the working Liberian family heads have been laid off from their various jobs due to recession which has contributed to another set back to their living situations.

**Environmental Characteristics:** The Liberian in New Hampshire is totally different from those back home in Liberia. In New Hampshire, the Liberian community is productive for the general community, as well as for their own growth. Some do volunteer work for

local organizations and also work in the evening. At least some are being environmentally friendly by working at hospitals and hotels as janitors, which clean the environment from pollutions. In addition, changing the environment was a better decision for many reasons: escape from war which led to hundreds and thousands dead, freedom, women and kids free from abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as the possibility of a future for the children. Now, in New Hampshire, they all know their rights, and are safer here in New Hampshire than in Liberia where the environment is hostile and not friendly to children and women because of the lack of education and social opportunities.

In conclusion, the population of the Liberian community in New Hampshire is growing every year. The community depends on one another sometimes for baby-sitting so that they do not have to pay money for day care, despite the fact that some get government assistance for baby-sitting and food stamps as well as subsidies' for housing or Section 8. But, childcare is expensive and that makes them rethink working full-time and even going to Second Start for ESL classes and other vocational school for capacity building. Most of them are bored socially due to isolation in their apartments, working part-time and not earning enough income because of illiteracy resulting in their being poor economically, and environmentally. Some are isolated because of no public transportation; the areas are also far away from one another which makes it harder for some of them especially children and those who do not have valid driver licenses, to move around to visit friends and relatives.

However, the Liberian community needs improvement in some areas such as education to increase their income, public transportation, after-school programs, social services to process their green cards and citizenship applications. Moreover, their living standards are somehow better in New Hampshire than back home in Liberia, and they meet once a month to discuss issues affecting their community. In addition, 80 percent are able to read and write through the help of Second Start and other volunteers community members. But, these volunteer' services are not enough help for them to move on to the next level of education such as having skills and building capabilities to enhance productivity.

They also organize social events to celebrate the home country's Independence's Day, and celebrate each other's birth-days so that they can get together for entertainments. This change of environment is significant for them. But here again, the issues are isolation which contributes to depression and the needs for public transportation to ease visitations. Some social amenities must be provided to occupy them at least twice a week.

## **II. Problem Analysis**

### **A. Problem statement**

Refugees are those who fled from their own countries to another country fearing persecution because of their political opinions, race, religion, sexual orientation national origin and war. Based on these factors, the United States, Canada, Australia, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden have resettled many refugees around the world who have been persecuted in the past and fear being persecuted when they return to their own country. However, to be eligible for refugee status a person must demonstrate and convince the immigration officer that he or she is qualified to be a refugee under United Nations refugee guidelines. Many of the refugees came to the United States and other countries so that they could rebuild their lives. But most of them face challenges when they arrive in the United States, because of many reasons such as cultural shock, language barriers and starting another entry level job where in their countries some were lawyers, medical doctors, accountants, engineers, professors and teachers with fully loaded resumes. But they cannot work in those fields here in the United States due to language barriers and certification requirements.

According to a University of New Hampshire's (UNH) recent report (2009), most of the refugees who have been resettled in the Granite State received more community-based support than from resettlement agencies in New Hampshire. Moreover, many New Hampshire residents have welcomed and collectively provided community assistance to the refugees, and the newly arrived refugees also get help from other refugees who have been here longer than they.

The arrival of refugees in New Hampshire between 1997 and 2008 represents 0.04 percent of New Hampshire's population of 1.3 million. Most of the refugees were resettled in Manchester, Concord and Laconia. The problems and obstacles New Hampshire refugees faced researchers found through interviews and surveys of those affected, including city officials, police officials, church leaders, activists, employers, journalists and community-based volunteers.



- Insufficient federal funding for resettlement
- Required to start full time jobs without sufficient English
- Lack of public transportation
- Lack of affordable housing
- Low pay rate
- Lack of health care
- Not getting enough dental care
- Women are always home to take care of children
- Not enough assistance to continue education
- Lack of professional qualifications.

These problems mentioned above exist in the refugees community simply because federal funding is inadequate to sustain the refugees, and they are required to enter the workforce so that they will be self-reliant which is good idea, but they still need English lessons so that they will continue their education if they wish to. Solid education, and obtaining a professional diploma or degree will result in higher wages and productivity to the community. Affordable housing is another problem for the newly arriving refugees. It obliges the family heads to seek whatever jobs they can get to keep their family under good control, so that the children will not be beggars on the street. During personal communications with refugee community members, public transportation was mentioned many times as a problem that has been and continues to be an issue. Most especially are the newly arriving refugees from Iraq and Bhutan who are always waiting for buses an hour and so, in a cold freezing weather that causes pneumonia and other sicknesses.

Even the recent report from the University of New Hampshire addressed this issue of public transportations, and the state must do something to improve the living standards of the newly arriving refugees so that they will not be discouraged and relocate to other states for more opportunities. Refugees represent New Hampshire's cultural diversity and are essential to the state workforce, which contributes by paying taxes to the state and the federal government for revenue generation.

While conducting an in-depth interview with Amy Marchildon (October 4, 2009), the director of international services of Lutheran Social Service of New Hampshire, it was found out that some refugee women are absolutely isolated due to baby sitting and taking care of the household, the priority being on the husbands getting jobs. She continued to stress education for refugees regarding community services, as well as their rights and responsibilities as community members through orientation classes. The only limitation the refugees have is that they are not allowed to vote until they obtain their citizenship status.

She also mentioned about family income that a couple can work on different shifts to boost the family income. Otherwise, one person's wage barely covers the monthly family expenditures. As a result of financial burdens and many bills, refugees finally understood what it means for the couple to work on different shifts to ease the expenditures of the household. When asked whether there are enough social services for refugees, she goes on to say that because of the economic downturn everything had shrunk locally and nationally. Services are limited, and there has been a lot of controversy going on at the local level, and national level, both looking to the federal government for the refugees resettlement program to be well funded. She said, in fact, that the Refugees Resettlement Program is under review so that the funding will be increased, and she hopes this will change to improve the system.

The consequences of the problems the refugees face are a language barrier, which is one of obstacles to their promotion as managers at the various job sites. In general, it affects all the refugees' and immigrant communities for having an accent. In addition, isolation of women at home taking care of the children may be considered a cultural limitation. As for economic consequence, one income per family is not enough money to support the household, and men will have the financial burdens to keep supporting their families. This is why solid education can play a pivotal role in getting good income from work to uplift a family, most especially the refugee community from falling below the poverty line.

Through personal communications with refugee community members including in-depth interviews with experts, all these issues were established. In addition, “shortage of services for refugees have helped the New Hampshire residents to identify and publicized issues faced by the New Hampshire refugees in the community” (University of New Hampshire Report, 2009). In order to model the way and enable the Granite State (NH) to respond to the refugees needs, issues must be publicized in news- papers and on radio stations so that newly arriving refugees needs will be met not only the refugee community, but also the New Hampshire residents as well as the immigrant community. If these issues are fully resolved, it will contribute to the state’s social, economic boom, and encourage more migration to the state as well. Public transportation into and from jobs will motivate refugee and immigrant communities to even have second job and also encourage their loved ones to move from other states to the Granite State, which will increase the number of New Hampshire tax payers. “Some of these refugees work far away from their home approximately 20 to 30 minutes drive to their various job locations and are sometimes fired for showing up late to work, because of the lack of public transportation in the state”. (Sheriff, Personal Communication, November 2, 2009).

According to the survey conducted by the University of New Hampshire (UNH, 2009), given to New Hampshire community members about whether the state has benefited from the Refugees Resettlement Program, many of those interviewed had two opposite answers. Some responded that refugee’s resettlement program permits them to rethink their own family history and to reiterate their common humanity by engaging in acts of generosity. Moreover, they also saw refugees as contributing to the dream of New Hampshire as supporting and welcoming immigrant communities. Director of Lutheran Social Service of International Services Amy Marchildon, who has worked with refugees for nearly 14 years supported this idea during an in- depth interview with her, (Personal Communication, October 4, 2009). She stated that, “the New Hampshire community is very welcoming, but funding and assistance is limited until they start working or up to eight months of arrival. If, they have children under the age of 18 are not employable and they do not obtain employment they will be placed on temporary assistance for needy families (TANF). As for single people, if they are not working they can be placed on the

refugees' cash assistance (RCA) program up to six months and another extra two months provided they do not find jobs, and there will be no more assistance unless, disabled". In addition, Cathy Chesly indicated that "The community assets for the refugees are aid from refugee resettlement agency in cash, support from local and state welfare agencies, initial apartments set up by refugee agencies, legal support, access to public education, ESL classes medical support and women and children food support." (Cathy Chesley, Director of Immigration and Refugee Services, Personal Communication, October 4, 2009).

By comparing Liberian refugees to the other refugees, Liberian refugees had English backgrounds from their country of origin. It is a Pidgin English with an accent, but, still more understandable than others refugees who have never spoken English at all, and the agency needs to locate an interpreter to communicate their needs. Moreover, Liberian refugees had many single women with children and single men. Other refugees many of whom came as couples with dependents speak good English; some have limited English, but most have never spoken English at all. But, the challenges are the same for Liberians coming to a new country, with a different culture. They try to be independent as soon as possible so that services and benefits will not run out. In addition, they come with higher expectations forgetting that there are going to be challenges and struggles to overcome and begin paying their travel loan within six months. Travel loans are the loans given to the refugees to pay for their flight tickets to the United States. These travel loans have no interest, and it is a good way to establish credit for the refugees. In addition, adjusting to weather and driving in the snow are other huge stresses to the refugees' community here in New Hampshire.

In conclusion, refugee community leaders, refugee social workers and translators as well as refugees themselves, unanimously agreed that the following key factors are issues faced by New Hampshire refugees, which includes: limited federal funding, employment, limited English classes, lack of experience and trained translators as sources of social and emotional support, limited legal assistance for refugees and their families to ease their ability to obtain United States citizenship. Lack of community volunteers as essential

resources within the settlement process is an issues as well, and technical support, including refugees as part of the overall challenges to the state to provide basic services to it's residents including health care, public health services, public transportation and solid public education from elementary school through college. If those issues are not taken care of, the result will be decreased refugees productivity in the community and even relocation to other states to seek better opportunities.

## **B. Stakeholders**

Listed below are the stakeholders in the project. Stakeholders involved in the refugees' resettlement play a vital role for the integration process into the communities in New Hampshire. But there are still some needs that are beyond those stakeholders' control such as the current recession which had contributed to unemployment. In addition to the recession, social services and public transportation are not enough to eliminate those growing issues.

- Refugees
- Lutheran Social Services
- International Institute
- Local government
- Community leaders
- Health care providers
- Family
- Teachers
- Volunteers
- Catholic Charities

**Table 3.** Stakeholder Analysis for Concord, New Hampshire Liberian Community.

Stakeholders	Attitude	Confidence	Influence	Confidence	Strategies
Refugees	+	?	M	+	Help with translations, transportation and baby sitting
Lutheran social services	++	/	H	++	Provide place for training, teaching, entry level jobs such as stores, factories and hotels
International Institutes	++	/	H	++	Provide place for training teaching, entry level jobs such as farming, factories and hotels
Local Government	++	/	H	++	Technical support and after school program
Community Leaders	++	/	L	++	Sometimes provide interpretation and transportation
Health Care Providers	++	/	H	++	Provide health screening
Family	+	?	L	+	Support morally and emotionally
Teachers	++	/	H	++	Provide ESL training
Volunteers	++	/	H	++	Materials support
Catholic Charities	++	/	H	++	Provide legal assistances

### **C. Project goal in CED term/Situation and condition to be changed**

As mentioned in the problem tree, limited education, public transportation, recession, discrimination and affordable housing are among the conditions that are leading to problems in the refugee community. These issues and problems were specified by community members, community leaders, family members, refugees that have lived in the area longer, experts, social service workers, residents and government workers. According to a University of New Hampshire (UNH) recent report, the shortage of services has helped the situation by publicizing it so that refugee needs will be evaluated for change.

Another issue is the adjustment to permanent resident and citizenship status. It seems that refugees need help applying for their green cards as well as becoming citizens. According to one of the social workers, Katie Berube, at the International Institute of Manchester, “Refugees are eligible for adjustment of status as permanent residents within one year of arrival and can still become citizens in five years of arrival in United States (Personal Communication, December 18, 2009). Berube also stated that, the agency has lawyers who help refugees to adjust to their status as permanent residents and citizens. It seemed that some community members are not aware of some of the services provided by the resettlement agencies in New Hampshire. However, some Liberia community members say that they need help applying for citizenship. These community members need to be informed and educated about services provided by the resettlement agencies so that refugees will benefit from these services.

After several face-to-face interviews with community members and community leaders as well as experts working directly with refugees, it appears that affordable housing, public transportation, ESL classes, technology classes, legal assistance for adjustment of status, after-school programs, baby-sitting, qualified interpreters, community assets and resources should be available to the Liberian community as well as the entire refugee

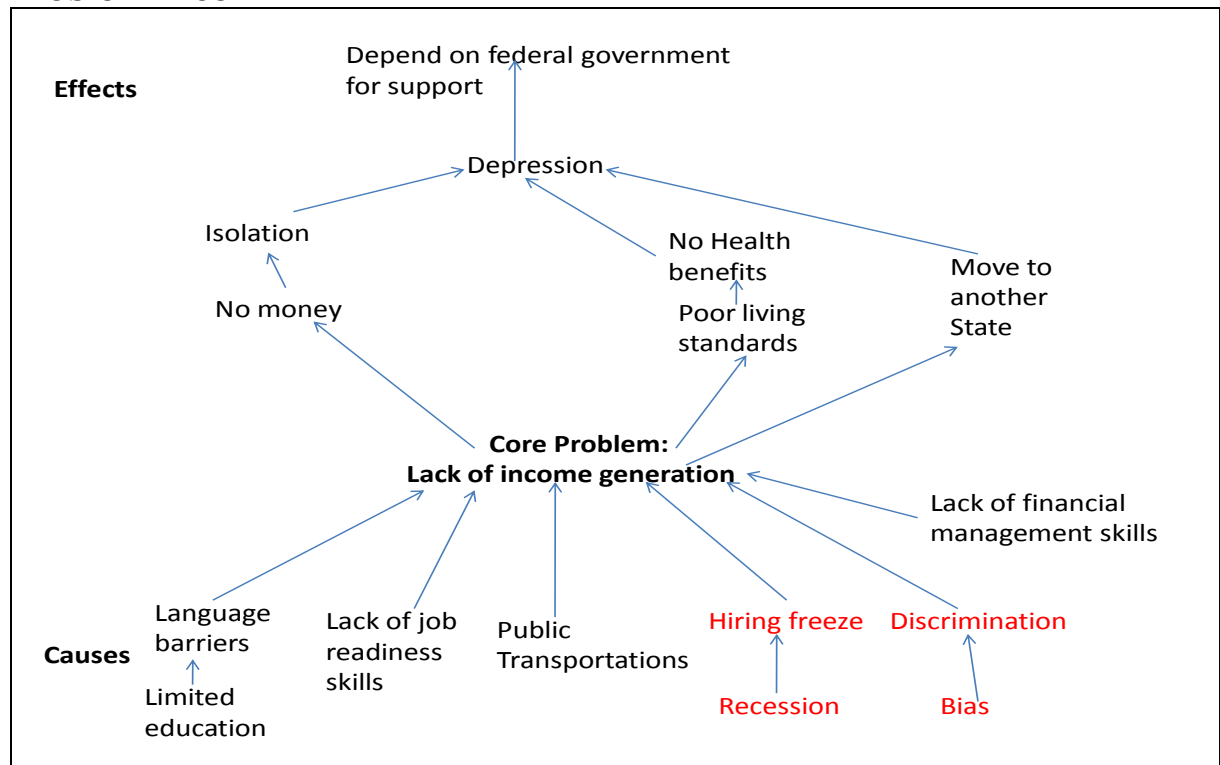
community so that they will feel empowered and able to participate in building the community. If the core values of Community Economic Development (CED), participation, equity and sustainability are appropriately formulated and implemented, these will lead to the capacity building of refugees and the entire immigrant community. This will further contribute to fostering collaboration and societal productivity rather than dependency on the federal government for support.

In light of the above, microfinance for those interested in establishing their own businesses will also help the community to progress. Not all refugees are interested in working in factories and hospitals. Some are interested in farming, being seamstresses and babysitting as well as becoming teachers. In order to give rise to specializations and empower the refugee, microfinance is one of the powerhouses for development and ending poverty. It is not only the power-house, but, one tool for the people to obtain their rights, liberation and independence from chronic hunger and hardship.

The core problem targeted in this project is “Lack of Income Generation”, which is creating mass poverty in the refugee community as well as in the immigrant community in New Hampshire. This project has already identified the causes and effects of the core problem in the form of a problem tree. Again, these causes and sub-causes includes: limited education, language barriers, lack of communication, public transportations, isolation, moves to another state for better opportunities, recession, hiring freezes, cultural shock, discrimination and barriers to employment. Due to these causes, the Liberian and the entire immigrant community could be affected by not having jobs, money, or health benefits leading to poor living standards as well depression and dependency on the federal government for support. In order to overcome these issues, the community needs to seek help from local government and other organizations to establish programs such as after-school programs for children and microfinance for those interested in opening businesses as well as basic English and technology classes to expand the capability of the Liberian as well as entire immigrant community.



## Problem Tree



The above problem tree shows problems that are both controllable and those that are not. Those in red are not controllable. The rest are currently being working on, and it appears that the program will meet its outcomes. The participants are motivated and willing to make good use of the program. In regard to the problem tree above, careful analysis was used to identify the needs of the Liberian community as well as the entire immigrant community in Concord, New Hampshire.

The cause of lack of income generation is due to the limited education, which is contributing to a language barrier preventing immigrants from penetrating the United States workforce. Out of the 54 Liberians interviewed in the Concord and Manchester areas, about 35 people agreed that illiteracy and the communication barrier is the first and foremost obstacle preventing them from earning more income in a year than what they are getting now. They also kept on elaborating that they hope that they can go back to school to acquire skills and specializations such as having a certificate or degree in nursing. When asked why only in nursing, the response was that it is in big demand and a

worker can obtain a job soon after graduation, even with an accent and moreover, can even practice in this field back in Liberia to help serve humanity. They all stated that they wanted to go school to at least get certification in nursing. But, the jobs and children requirement cannot permit them to go back to school for specializations.

It was also perceived during the interviews, that they value education as pivotal to success in life. But the problem also depends on the cost of education in United States. Another issue that was addressed was having an accent, which can also lead to job discrimination in New Hampshire unless the person is a nurse. This is not as true in other administrative positions such as accounting, finance, and law. Even a person with an accent is as capable of fulfilling the job requirements as an American. Immigrants are discriminated by some employers and will not be promoted as managers because of the notion that their clients cannot understand an immigrant person based on his or her accent. It appeared that other 24 want to establish businesses on their own rather than go back school to further their learning capabilities.

Public transportation is a significant issue in New Hampshire; it is affecting the immigrant community as well as New Hampshire residents. During the Liberian refugee's arrival between 1997 to 2005, they suffered while job searching and grocery shopping. Some even could not get a job for long periods of time. Sometimes, they paid more money about \$30 to \$40 a day for a taxi as well as walking long distances and waiting for more than an hour for a bus to arrive. Some even had to relocate to other states because of New Hampshire's lack of public transportations. Even now, the newly arriving refugees from Bhutan and Iraq are facing this same issue of public transportations. It is encouraging the immigrant community to relocate to another part of the United States, which is not good for New Hampshire's infrastructure development and diverse culture. Something must be done to have enough public transportation around for community asset and resource building.

Recession is now hitting the refugee community, most especially those working in the factories. Of the 22 Liberians interviewed in the Concord area, 15 people were still

maintaining their jobs but the hours were reduced to 20 to 28 hours, and the other 7 people were laid off from their jobs, where they have been working for about 2 to 3 years. This economic downturn is also contributing to depression for some newly arriving refugees because since their arrival, there are no jobs and the benefits they have are running out. According to an article released by New Hampshire Public Radio, the United States resettles about 60 thousand refugees a year. As they arrive, they usually get assistance for a number of months. In the past, that is normally sufficient to sustain them until they find employment. Unfortunately, there is a recession. Most refugees are a week away from having no job and no way to pay rent, which is causing depression for many of them.

During in depth interviews with some refugee community leaders, volunteers, and refugee themselves, it seemed that refugees or immigrants are lacking in job readiness and financial management skills because they are in a rush to have a job so that the resettlement agency will be able to close their files. Thus, they are without the proper orientation of job readiness and financial management classes. Most of them usually have seasonal or part-time jobs with no benefits. As a result, they end up having no jobs when the contract of seasonal jobs is over. One community leader pointed out that there are several of these cases across the state: people who had seasonal jobs, and are now unemployed.

In conclusion, biases at jobs sites can leads to discrimination and barriers to employment. All of these causes contribute to a lack of income generation. If there is no money or health insurance, people will be poor and living standards will decline which leads to depression and dependency on the federal government.

### **III. Literature Review**

The literature review is a vital evaluation of knowledge on a specific subject. It can also be defined as what has been studied or done by another person on the same topic. The purpose of the literature review of this project is to support all the points that this paper addresses about the issues affecting the immigrant community. The issues that were identified through this research of the refugees in New Hampshire indicate that there are numerous problems in the community that CED practitioners should be aware of so that they will help community members to be self-sufficient.

According to Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). “The nation has admitted nearly 762,400 refugees over the most recent ten fiscal years (FY’97-06) for permanent resettlement. In addition, asylum admissions that were capped at 10,000 per year have become uncapped and added an additional 216,800 admissions over this period. This is an average of nearly 98,000 refugees and asylees per year” (p. 13). Unlike immigrants, who normally are sponsored by relatives or employers, refugees (including asylees) end up sponsored by the American public. “Taxpayer-supported programs include English and job training, housing, supplemental security income assistance and other programs. For example, under the office of Refugee Resettlement’s (HHS) assistance funding for FY’02, \$71900,000 was available for refugee employment training and other services programs based on a three-year refugee settlement program covering 284,646 refugees” (FAIR, p.13).

The report states that Lutheran Community Services (LCS) “offers multiple programs to provide assistance to refugees through its Multicultural Community Services Seattle Office. These programs include a Reception & Placement program to welcome refugees at the airport, arrange accommodations, provide furniture, and orient the refugees to daily life in their new home. Case managers-able to speak the refugee’s language-help newly-arrived refugees process paper paperwork and secure government assistance, employment programs, attend ESL classes, and generally find solutions to any problems that arise in the resettlement process; an Immigration Counseling and Advocacy Program ( ICAP) to

provide low-cost immigration counseling to Seattle's refugee and immigrant populations. ICAP counsels refugees and immigrant about their rights and responsibilities pertaining to their status help clients with all immigration forms and applications, and represents clients before INS" (2008, p.2).

"Refugees are those who fled from their own country of origin fearing persecution and well founded fear of being persecuted if return to their country because of their race, religion, nationality, or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to benefit himself or himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR, 1995). Refugees' status is granted by the United Nation High Commission for Refugees known as (UNHCR). Once granted refugee status, a person is automatically admitted into the United States, has all the benefits, rights and responsibilities as a United States citizens with the exception of not being able to vote until becoming a citizen. Refugees become residents and within one year of arrival, they can apply to adjust their status as permanent residents (Green Card) as well as qualify to obtain United States citizenship within five years.

The researchers also point out that in the recent years, large numbers of refugees coming in-to the United States have been minorities from Asia, Africa and South America, and a significant majority make United States their permanent residence. However, adjustment to the society raises particular difficulties for many new Americans and racism often prevails. (Child Welfare League of America, 2005). Several issues confound effective service provision and intervention when working with newcomers, resistance, and communication barriers, personal and family background, and ethnic identity. As refugees, isolation loneliness and depression may appears in their early years while in the United States and can persist even longer. Service providers or practitioners should consider this and show empathy regarding their loneliness and isolation. The Child Welfare League of America reported that "Loneliness could be distinguished as distress related or distress free" (2005, p, 576).

According to the reports from New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning “Since the early 1980s, more than 6000 refugees have made New Hampshire their new home. Refugees have greatly contributed to the State and local communities, through their hard work, and they have strengthened the State economy, and their presence have shaped and enriched the cultural diversity of New Hampshire which is predominated with white population” (NHOEP, 2008, p. 1). These refugees come from more than thirty (30) different countries around the world and represent different ethnic background and diverse cultures. For the most part, refugees adjust well to New Hampshire life. But other needs such as public transportation, weather, rapid employment, and affordable housing, remain their major concerns (NHOEP, 2008). Meanwhile, it was also reported that New Hampshire has welcomed many Liberian refugees from 1997 to 2007. The number of resettled Liberian Refugees is approximately 243 people.

While researching the electronic databases, it was found that similar research on the refugees population had been done by the University of New Hampshire (UNH) which states that “most refugees who fled from war from their own countries fearing persecution and were resettled here in New Hampshire found community support was critical to their success while services were not enough for them to settle well within the community ( 2009, p.1). In 2009, it was reported that in reaction to the struggle refugees faced, many New Hampshire residents have come forward to collaboratively and individually provide community support for the newly arriving refugees. Researchers also stated that refugees receive very important help from other refugees, many of whom come from other countries around the world and knew what it was like coming to a country with different modern traditions and culture more developed in all aspects of life such modern technology.

The report also pointed out that the new refugees settled in New Hampshire between 1997 and 2008 represent .04 percent of the New Hampshire total population of 1.3 million. Although various cities and towns have places of refugee settlement, most refugees have been resettled in Manchester and Concord areas as well as Laconia. Further interviews were conducted in 2008. These people included city officials, police officers,

church leaders, activists, employers, journalists and community based-volunteers. All agreed that the following obstacles to refugee resettlement include those listed:

- Federal policy of “sink or swim”
- Limited settlement assistance
- Insufficient federal funding for resettlement
- The requirement to begin full time employment before sufficient ESL education
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of affordable housing
- Low wages
- Lack of health care
- Shortage of dentists
- Isolation of women at home taking care of children
- Insufficient assistance in continuing education
- Lack of recertification of professional qualifications
- To educate the entire New Hampshire population about United States immigration law including the restrictions that severely limit most legal immigration. (UNH Report, August 5, 2009, p.2).

If at all these barriers were removed, there would be a significant improvement to the living standards of the refugee as well as enhancing the state’s economic development and enhancing the productivity of the newcomers, which will also inspire other immigrants to relocate to the Granite State for opportunities. Refugees in general have brought an essential diversity of culture and tradition as well as skills. But the problem is that those skills are not directly transferable to the United States workforce. At the time of the report from University of New Hampshire community members saw refugees as a pivotal resource for the state.

The census data and other various sources reported that “United States is the land of immigrants and will continue to be land of immigrants” (Census Data, 2008, p, 4). It was also perceived that three-fifths of United States’ population growth since 1990 came from new immigrants and their children and half of the job growth in the 1990s from

immigrants workers. According to the report immigrants are an important element in the health care field. They made up to 25 percent of physicians and 15 percent of nurses all of whom came to the United States with ambition and dedication to utilize the opportunity and become productive citizens. Despite this fact, xenophobia still exists in America, but, opportunity must be shared equally so that immigrants can prove their capabilities regardless of national origin or accent. In addition, the immigrant population has doubled since the era of President Bill Clinton in 1990, and it continues to grow with a high percentage of refugees these days from other parts of Africa, South East Asia and the Middle East. To synthesize issues raised by the literature review, immigrants and refugees are facing similar barriers such as medical care, language barriers and other cultural differences as well as misunderstanding the entire health system and culture. These barriers remain for all foreign born who share the similar needs in United States and which must be addressed so that community economic development practitioners can better serve the needs of the refugees and immigrants in order to improve their economic standing and enhance the productivity of all.

Despite the arrival orientation for the refugee communities in the United States, they often get into trouble with the laws in United States by abusing their wives and children forgetting that, it is forbidden and against the law to abuse anyone in the United States. As stated in the Concord Monitor by staff writer Chelsea Conaboy (2009), non-profit organizations uses federal funding to assist victims of domestic violence and therefore refugees should report any abuse in the community. This issue of domestic violence in the refugee or immigrant community is the result of cultural differences which is causing them to abuse their spouses and children. Some women are afraid of reporting abuse in the household due to fear of deportation of their husbands. The report also mentioned that “refugees and immigrants are protected against crime and domestic violence under the Violence Against Women Act” (2009, p, 1).

In August 2009, the Women’s Refugee Commission traveled to Phoenix Arizona to identify issues faced by the young refugee population in the region. The commission’s key findings were that English skills were the greatest obstacles to integration into the



community, as well as the poor education that they received during the time they were in the various refugee camps and the orientation that was provided before coming to the states was not enough. Based on their initial findings, it was recommended that all these deficiencies should be improved: the time limit of cultural orientation should be increased before resettlement as well as all refugees should be financially independent within the 120 and 180 days of arrival in United States, as outlined by Reception and Placement Cooperative Agreement. The commission also pointed out that in order to foster collaboration there must be strong linkages between international and resettlement programs to share information and training materials so that the transition will be easier for the newly arriving refugees into the community. Overall, the commission's basic recommendations are to improve the living standards of the refugee population by communication and capacity building for career advancement so that the integration process will be smooth and fast for the newcomers. (Women's Refugee Commission, 2009).

The Human Rights Institute of Georgetown University (2009) notes that "For too long, there has been a myopic focus on the quality of refugees admitted to the detriment of quality of resettlement" (p.1). The report also states that "Most Iraqis refugees are not getting sustainable jobs, and many of them are unable to support themselves or their families on the public assistance they are receiving (p.1). It was reported that "students also interviewed nearly 75 Iraqis refugees across the country and among those interviews; they include a physician, a teacher, a veterinarian, and a social worker. Many found themselves unable to use the remarkable expertise they left their country with and are now jobless and no means of making money because of the recession, which has led them to poverty as well as poor living standards in United States and some are even homeless" (p.1).

The study was conducted by human rights action in collaboration with the Human Rights Institute of Georgetown University Law Center and the report found the following below:

- Underfunded and misguided employment services
- Lack of adequate English language training

- Transportation option not available
- Limited access to vocational training and recertification.

In addition to the above, the center reported that “The United States Refugee Admissions Program’s (USRAP) focus on immediate employment incentivizes caseworker to push refugee towards lower paying and less sustainable jobs, irrespective of refugee’s professional and educational accomplishments” (p.25). Moreover, it was also reported that “the limited duration of public assistance makes pursuing recertification, vocational training and higher education unsustainable without financial aid from the federal government. But those people who do search for recertification, vocational training, or higher education the payoff can be fantastic” (p.25).

In conclusion, the United States Refugee Admission Program (USRAP) must review the refugee resettlement process carefully noting the concerns about immediate survival of the refugees who are already in the United States and formulate strategies to ease the resettlement process and allow the program to be a successful one. The reports show that the United States Refugee Admission Program including the local agencies are not doing enough to enable the arriving refugee community to become self-sufficient and program funding is limited to sustain them. Not only funding, but also public transportation and language barriers are issues that need to be reviewed and implemented so that quality services will be provided to improve the living standards of the refugee in New Hampshire and across the country.

#### **IV. Project Design/Logic Model**

Below is the explanation of the graphical logic model. It tells the readers how the parts link to one another. Inputs: Building, volunteers, specialists computers, curriculum, books, pens, pencils, sheets, furnitures, driver, cars, gas, employers and trainers which are going to be used to facilitate and provide basic training skills to participants. Activities: The program provides basic training such as reading, writing, computer, financial management, one-to-one career building, employment, child care, referrals and provide transportation services to and from classes, which will encourage the participants to productivity as well as gaining entry level jobs to begin earning more income. Outputs: 12 participants were linked to volunteers drivers, which enabled them to complete the programs in basic reading, writing, computer, financial management, and prepare for job interviews so that there will be a change in their lives.

Short-term outcomes: Improved basic reading, writing and computer, financial management skills, increased access to transportation and child care as well as increased access to employment sources by obtaining entry level work experience.

Intermediate outcomes: Seeing those 12 participants in the workforce, saving more money than before and becoming productive community members, which results in changing their current situations from lack of income generation to an intermediate outcome by participating in the workforce and becoming economically independent which will improve the living standards of the participants as a long-term outcome that was set as a target point. Assuming there will be 12 interested participants in the program, and once completing the training session jobs availability might become an issue due to the current recession.

On the other hand, an environmental factor such as public transportation may be an obstacle to participants attending classes on a regular basis as well as present job requirements and employment opportunities in the future. Therefore, this environmental

aspect will need to be reviewed by staff to formulate strategies to address the issue if it occurs.

In view of above explanation of the logic model, the long-term outcome, which is basic capacity building that will lead to economic security, is the principal goal of this project.

**Table 4: Logic Model**

Long-Term Outcome	Economic Autonomy			
Intermediate outcomes	Participate in workforce			
Short-Term Outcomes	Improved basic reading, writing, and computer skills	Improved financial management skills	Increased access to transportation and child care	Increased access to employment sources
Outputs	12 people completed the program	12 people trained in financial management	12 people linked to volunteer driver	12 people trained for interview preparation
Activities	Provide basic reading, writing and computer trainings	Provide financial management training	Provide transportation and child care	Provide one to one career building and employment referrals
Inputs	Building, Curriculum, computers, furniture, trainers, books, pen,	Building, specialists, curriculum, pen, pencils, furniture, books	Car, driver, volunteers, gas	Building, trainers, volunteers, employers, curriculum

	pencils, sheets, volunteers			
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Assumption: 12 people interested & job availability	Environmental Factors: Public transportation & employment opportunities
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## **V. Methodology & Implementation Plan/Project Work Plan**

### **A. Project Participants**

The project participants include the Liberian immigrants and all others immigrants who were resettled in Concord, New Hampshire as refugees. There is a total number of 12 participants in the program that are currently learning basic reading, writing, computer and financial management skills. The program has however targeted this community so that they will be able to keep their current jobs and apply for their citizenship status. However some are now working seasonal jobs and part-time jobs, which cannot uplift them from poverty. But the majority of them remain unemployed because of the current economic downturn. The project yet intends to make them vibrant and productive community members. So far, attendance is encouraging and participants are looking forward to achieving the outcomes at the end of project life cycle.

### **B. Community Role**

The community and the Lutheran Social services response to this project have been enormous. Lutheran Social Services who is one of the refugees' resettlement agencies in New Hampshire has recommended this project to other Liberians who needs more access to ESL classes and citizenship lessons. As for the community, some volunteers come in occasionally to help with transportation and one-to-one resume building. Many community volunteers come from the Oasis Christian Church and they provide babysitting so that participants will focus while in class. The issue is that the participants do not have time to learn because of the priority of having jobs to help in paying bills. So far, this is the challenge the program is facing with stakeholders.

### **C. Host Organization**

The project's name is Concord Development Center for Immigrants. The host organization is Oasis Christian Church in Concord, New Hampshire. This church did provide room and board, furniture, books, pens and pencils. Volunteers are also members of this church that provides baby-sitting and one-to-one instruction. The program manager is engaged in talking to community members about the program offered by the Concord Development Center for Immigrants. At present, Concord Development Center for Immigrants is implementing the basic learning tools, these basic learning tools are the grassroots capacity building efforts needed for the immigrant community to be empowered in the community. The program targets basic literacy, which will help to improve reading, writing, speaking, and basic computer skills to boost the participants in sustaining economic empowerment. The way this program is designed, is more one-to-one in-class training to enable participants to achieve the short-term outcomes as soon as possible.

### **D. Project Role and Staffing**

**Table 5**

Program Manager and Senior Recruiter	Recruit, transportation, monitor and evaluate the project
Assistant Program manager, grant writer, and coordinator	Transportation, write grant and coordination of the program
Senior ESL and Computer Teacher	Provide curriculum, teach basic skills
Assistant ESL and Computer Teacher	Help with building curriculum and teaching
Baby-sitter	Help with controlling the kids

As soon as the project was proposed to Oasis Christian Church in Concord, New Hampshire, the church deemed it necessary and accepted the project proposal. Since the initial start of the program, there have been many volunteers from the Oasis Christian

Church in Concord assisting with the implementation of the project. But the main and regular staffing is composed of the following as described in the chart.

- Program designer who is the manager and senior recruiter: Develops, designs, implements the overall strategy planning of the project; recruits, monitors and evaluates the project. The program manager is also responsible for creating partnerships with other stakeholders such as Lutheran Social Services, local government and employers as well as overseeing the operational activities of the project.
- Assistant program manager and ESL teacher: Responsible for building the curriculum, teaching, writing grants; assist in managing the program operations with strategy planning, and executing implementation.
- Community liaison and program coordinator: Coordinates the day-to-day activities of the project with the stakeholders. Represents the organization at various meetings and effectively communicates the challenges the project faces while implementing the activities. The program coordinator also does community needs assessments (CNA) so the team will be able to analyze and develop strategies to enhance the productivity of the project, by reviewing the logic model to make any changes.
- Assistant ESL and computer teacher: Builds curriculum, teaches ESL classes and helps with resume building as well as helping in the outreach process such as marketing. Assists the ESL and computer teacher and also responsible for testing new participants to determine where they may be placed. In addition, the person in this position organizes the volunteer services.
- Baby-sitter: Responsible for controlling the children so that mothers will be able to attend classes.



## **E. Project Implementation Gantt Chart/Implementation Plan**

The Gantt chart is based on the methodology and implementation plan below, which is followed by a brief explanation of activities, dates, results and people responsible. This is the plan all volunteers including the program manager will implement until the end of project's life cycle. A teaching curriculum will be followed so that volunteers will not deviate from the teaching guidelines and there will be frequent monthly monitoring by the program manager to make sure participants have the basic reading, writing as well as basic computer skills. The twelve (12) participants will go through the class's schedules until they meet the requirement of the project which is to be able to read and write English as well as complete basic computer skills so that they will be able to obtain an entry-level job positions.

Qualified volunteers will assist program participants so that they become successful in their daily tasks at work places, which include basic reading, writing and computer skills. This will be done by measuring their abilities monthly. Once the participants obtain these basic skills, then program staff will connect them to vocational schools to expand their skills if participants wish. Books, pens, pencils and other necessary materials will be provided to secure and facilitate teaching so that both volunteers and participants will have hands-on tools. The program manager will pass out a monthly survey or ask each participant for his or her opinions about the program. The location of the program will allow for free parking so that participants will be able to park their cars without paying; the location will also be secure for optimum safety. A good location and free parking will encourage the participants to engage in learning and will encourage them to enter the workforce and earn salary. Furniture and computers are available to make learning hands-on and teachers or volunteers as well as the program manager, will help participants acquire their basic skills and to be able to gain entry-level jobs so that they will be productive in the community. Again, all these activities will be monitored on a monthly basis.

**Table 6: Gantt Charts**

<b>Short Term Outcome 1: Improved basic reading, writing and computer skills</b> <b>Short Term Outcome 2: Improved financial management skills</b> <b>Short Term Outcome 3: Increased access to transportation and child care</b>													
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Months</b>												<b>Outputs/Outcomes</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
<b>Provide reading, writing &amp; computer training</b>													12 people completed the program
Secure location													
Hire trainers													
Develop curriculum													Improved basic reading, writing, and computer skills
Secure materials													
<b>Provide financial management training</b>													12 people trained in financial management.  Improved financial management skills
Identify participants													
Hire trainers													
Develop curriculum													

Secure materials																
<b>Provide transportation &amp; child care</b>																
Identify participants who need transportation & child care																
Hire driver & baby sitter																
Set up participants with drivers																
Increased access to transportation and child care.																

Short Term Outcome 4: Increased access to employment sources.													
Activities	Timeframe (Months)												Outputs/Outcomes
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Provide one to one career building and employment referrals													12 people trained for interview preparation.
Set up resume building session													
Develop resume formats													

Prepare participants for interviews												
Link to employers												

Increased access to employment sources

## F. Budget

The table below explains how day-to-day expenditures are going to be used. The estimated cost for executing this project within a one year (1) period is based on all the operational costs the total of which came to be 22,000.00. Expenditures will contribute to the economic development of immigrants in the Concord area.

**Table 7:**

Items	Amount	Percent
Personnel ( Wage)	\$10,000.00	50%
Travel	\$8,000.00	30%
Supplies	\$1,000.00	6%
Contractual	\$\$\$\$\$\$	\$
Other Operating Expenses	\$1,500.00	7%
Indirect Overhead	\$1,500.00	7%
Total Project Budget	\$22,000.00	100%

## **VI. Monitoring Plan**

### **A. Monitoring Indicators**

Basic reading, writing and computer skills will be monitored by the program manager on a monthly basis so that staff can find solutions to problems as they occur. To keep the project ongoing and sustainable, new methodologies will be added to improve the system for the participants. The schedule of activities will be kept as planned unless it is necessary to changes. The monitoring plan is done by the program manager, through staff support to enhance the development of the program. Methods such as surveys, review of the record books and participants interview are the key elements to success. Through the monitoring plan, the program manager and the staff will be able to modify anything to improve the system. At the end of the every sessions, staff will help participants as well as train them in resume building and interview preparation so that they will be able to challenge the process by doing it on their own in the future.

**Table 8:**

Output	Performance indicator	Data source	Frequency of data collection	Person responsible
Resume building	# of participants with completed resume	Participants records	After every session on resume building	Program manager
Interview preparation	# number of participants completed interview training	Participants records	After every session of interview training	Program manager

## **B. Methods, tools, forms**

Methods, tools and forms used in monitoring the project are to make sure the program activities are able to achieve the outcomes of the project. The tools such as number participants using services provided by the Concord Development Center for Immigrants also includes the activities as well as outputs in the logic model and are all monitored on a monthly basis. Forms are also one of the methods that keep records consistent. Forms used in this program are attendance records of the participants, reviews of the record book, surveys, monthly reports, post tests, and referral forms. All these methods are relevant tools and forms for the monitoring process and are beneficial for overall improvement.

## **C. Team/Task**

This project is being implemented by the staff team of the Concord Development Center for Immigrants. The team has been working together to keep the program successful up to this point without pay, and all the day-to-day expenditures have been absorbed by those team volunteers with assistance from the Oasis Christian Church in the Concord Area. Since the beginning of this project, the team had linked the participants with others programs such as free diapers for mothers, clothing and the food pantry in the church. As mentioned in the project roles earlier, the tasks are assigned according the staffing and all staff work together to foster collaboration, which will enhance productivity of the overall project. All the project staff report monthly to the program manager to ensure that the project outcomes are sustainable.

#### **D. Monitoring Schedule**

Based on the staff consistency of the monitoring schedule, the program manager was able to keep track of all the activities, dates, project status, and timeliness. Further explanations were made to the program manager to see if any alternatives would change the schedule, but the project appeared to follow its schedule as planned and it did not have many delays, which was a significant contributor to the program's overall success.

## **VII. Evaluation Plan**

The intent of the evaluation plan is to better determine if the services provided are on the right course. The team will follow the evaluation plan to make sure participants achieve the goals of the project which is to be able to acquire basic reading and writing skills as well as basic computer skills that will enable them to gain entry-level jobs and become economically self-reliant. Indicators will be the factors to evaluate the project and how participants are demonstrating basic skills learned from classes, as well as being able to have savings accounts. Also, how many of them are using the services such as the transportation system and employment referral program. All these indicators will be determined by post testing at the end of each sessions and participants interviews or sources.



## Evaluation Plan Matrix

The evaluation plan matrix explains the outcomes and the indicators, which measures generally the degree of success in reaching the outcomes.

**Table 16:**

Outcomes	Indicators	Data gathering Method	Source(s)	Timeframe
<b>Short-Term Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading/writing and computer skills.</li> <li>financial management skills</li> <li>Access to transportation</li> <li>Access to employment source</li> </ul>	# of participants passed the basic skills of reading, writing and computer.  # of participants that have opened checking & saving accounts  # of participants used the transportation service.  # of participants referred to employment source	Post test	Participants	At the end of training
<b>Intermediate Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in workforce,</li> </ul>	# of participants who have a job. .	Post-test, interview and survey	Program participants	End of training
<b>Long-Term Outcomes:</b> Economic autonomy	# of participants obtain an entry level employment	Participant interviews, document review	Referral partner, career center, and program participants	Nine (9) months after the program completion,

## **A. Evaluation Variables and Indicators**

The Concord Development Center for Immigrants will use the evaluation method to determine indicators of short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes:

Short-term outcome 1: Improved basic reading, writing and computer skills for the immigrant community in the Concord area.

Indicators: Number of participants passing the basic reading, writing and computer training.

Short-term outcome 2: Improved financial management skill

Indicators: Number of participants that have opened savings account.

Short-term outcome 3: Increase access to transportation and child care.

Indicators: Number of participants using transportation and child care services.

Short-term outcome 4: Increase access to employment sources

Indicators: Number of participants referred to employment sources.

Intermediate outcome 1: Participation of workforce in New Hampshire

Indicators: Number participants who have jobs

Long-term outcome 1: Economy autonomy of the program participants

Indicators: Number of participants that obtain entry-level employment

## **B. Data Gathering Methods, tools, forms**

When it comes to data gathering methods, the project staff will specifically focus on the outcomes. Below are the methods, tools and for forms to gather related data.

- Short-term outcome 1: Post test and surveys
- Short-term outcome 2: Post test and surveys
- Short-term outcome 3: Participants surveys
- Short-term outcome 4: Participant surveys
- Intermediate outcome 1: Participants surveys or interviews
- Long-term outcome 1: Participants surveys or interviews

## **C. Data Analysis**

The program manager will work in collaboration with the staff of Concord Development Center for Immigrants to ensure that all data collected by post tests, surveys, interviews and documents reviews are accurate to the best of their knowledge, and this is the data that could be used to evaluate the outcomes of the project. Data collected will be analyzed by the evaluation team every month, then prepare an evaluation report and share the copies with the sponsor organization, stakeholders, community, and participant themselves.

## **D. Evaluation Team/tasks**

The evaluation team will keep up with the collection of data, such as attendance records, post tests, number of participants using the services such as transportation and child care, and monthly reports to ensure accuracy for the betterment of the project. This team will report monthly to the program manager where all members of the team collaboratively brainstorm and enhance the outcomes if there are any.

## **E. Evaluation Schedule**

The project evaluation was passed out to the participants in early January 2011 as surveys. The evaluation team including the program manager did review those surveys at the end of the January 2011. Along with the surveys, the program manager also conducted a focus group discussion with community members and participants themselves, the results were consistent with the survey data collected. Therefore, the team concluded that the project was going as planned. Though there were some delay because of the holidays and bad weather, alternative action was taken by the extending the completion dates as mentioned in the monitoring reports of December 2010 and January 2011.

## **VIII. Sustainability Plan**

### **A. Sustainability of the project activities and resources**

Concord Development Center for Immigrant in collaboration with the Oasis Christian Church in Concord set as its goal the creation of a learning center for the immigrant community in the Concord area. Its function was to support the capacity building efforts of the new neighbors' community and to provide access to fundamental tools that they need for the integration process. Having done all the community need assessments (CNA), it was unanimously agreed to implement the project so that the Concord Development Center for Immigrants with the help of Oasis Christian Church could give back to the community via building capacity.

Both of the organizations are committed to providing these ongoing services for the community. The key sustainability of this project has been the engagement of community leaders, participants, and stakeholders. The core values of CED, mentioned earlier in CED 791, are equity, participation and sustainability and when well executed with maximum participation, the result is usually sustainable. The Concord Development Center for Immigrants implemented these strategies to foster collaboration and grow the project. Despite all the beginning transportation difficulties and locating funding to finance the project, the staff and the volunteers from Oasis Christian Church did manage to overcome those challenges. It is now established as non-profit organization in New Hampshire by the name of Concord Development Center for Immigrants. The organization is in the process of applying for funding to boost some project activities in July 2011. Having worked with the church, the Concord Development Center for Immigrants will have strong backing to be qualified for grants.

## **B. Sustainability benefits**

The intermediate and long-term outcomes of this project are to see the participants participate in the workforce and become economically independent and productive community members as the Concord Development Center for Immigrants (CDCI) envisioned. As CDCI plan, the result will have a greater positive impact on the community. Investing in a project of capacity building, does not only benefit the community in which it was initiated, but it also benefits the local government as well as the federal government by not depending on the federal government for support, which empowers them to take control over their lives. This is economic development. Immigrants are motivated workers; they are willing to take whatever jobs they can to support themselves. Due to limited proficiency in English and limited social services to support their integration process, they remain unemployed for several months, and once employed they become many bosses' favorites because of their performance and motivation levels. Immigrants who have been here longer, have set an example by living the American Dream, by building assets and contributing to the greater good of the community. Therefore, the Concord Development Center for Immigrants (CDCI) has planned to provide basic living skills to the new neighbors in order to live and grow in their new community.

## **IX. Results**

As the project intended to provide basic life skills to the Liberians' Community in Concord New Hampshire, there came about unanticipated achievement to be opened to all immigrant populations in the Concord New Hampshire, which increased the number of the participants and encouraged cultural diversity for the betterment of all. Liberian participants having lived in the United State for a longer period of time than other nationalities and with English background, had speaking advantages, but other nationalities could write better than Liberian participants. However, there is maximum participation and the outcomes will be achieved as planned. At present, all the project activities in the implementation plan have been completed except training, which is ongoing.

The short-term outcomes approach entailed the empowerment of the immigrant community to take control of their lives by making good use of the basic educational opportunity provided to them by Concord Development Center for Immigrants (CDCI). Providing basic literacy to the immigrant community as planned in the project logic model and evaluation section, would allow them to be fully integrated into society and participate in community economic development that is beneficial to all. As discussed in the project logic model, the long-term outcome is to gain economy self-sufficiency. In order to achieve the project's long-term outcome, the activity was divided into many other activities such as basic reading, writing, computer skills, financial management training, one-to-one career building, employment referrals, transportation and child care services so that participants would achieve the long-term outcome, which is to be economically self sufficient rather than depending on the federal government for support.

While this project is providing basic life skills to the adult immigrants population living in the Concord area, participants are still challenged with limited English proficiency and adult lives making it difficult to fully complete the short-term outcomes within a short time. Over the past eight months, the project had been focusing on improving basic reading, writing and computer skills. Some of the participants had previously attended

other ESL classes in Concord, New Hampshire. Those participants who had some reading and writing skills, are currently learning basic financial management and computer skills and had already been prepared for job interviews. Moreover, the project had established partnerships with five employers and was able to link three participants to employers for part-time positions. Despite the fact that public transportation is scarce and inadequate, the project is able to provide transportation to those who need it so that the project will have maximum participation and be sustainable.

Involvements of the stakeholders and partnerships are essential to the success of any project, which means engaging the community leaders, refugees themselves, the local government and resettlement agencies. These groups have had a great impact on the success of this project. The good news is that some participants were referred by ESL classes run by Lutheran Social Services, which increased the number of participants. The participants have been attending classes two times a week to receive educational trainings and basic life skills and the project will continue to provide those basic life skills regardless of not being able to get outside funding.

Since the arrival of those refugees in Concord, New Hampshire, there has been increased community outreach to ease the integration process. Because of this outreach, the Concord Development Center for Immigrants with the help of the Oasis Christian Church is able to provide basic life skills training to the immigrant population in the Concord area. Establishing this community center for immigrants has had a positive impact in meeting the needs of the immigrant community in the Concord area. Due to the economic downturn, funding, a limited timeframe and only meeting two times a week as well as participants' very limited English backgrounds; the project could not meet all its outcomes in eight months period, but the project is still implementing its activities for the good of the community.



**Short term outcome 1:**

- Improved basic reading, writing, and computer skills

**Short-term outcome 2:**

- Improved financial management skills

**Output for Short-term Outcomes 1 and 2:** 12 people participated in the program.

**Achievements:** As part of the preparation to participate in the workforce and to become economically independent, the program and its participants were welcomed by community members from the Oasis Christian Church. Program participants are motivated to learn skills as well as grow. So far, the program has made referrals to five (5) different employers. Four (4) out of the 12 participants in the training program successfully completed phase 1 of the training session, which is mainly about basic reading, writing, and computer training along with interviews preparation. Three (3) participants have been linked to employers for part-time positions. Short term outcome 2, which is financial management skills, has not been fully completed by all first-level participants because the program is trying to improve basic reading, writing, computer and interview preparation.

**Challenges:** Weather was a challenge to the participants as well as the staff. The classes were canceled on numerous occasions for safety concerns. Other challenges are the transportation issue, as are many of the providers of the English as a second Language (ESL) program, as well as the timeframe. Some people are willing to participate in the evening classes, but the staff is not available to teach in the evening because they have other commitments.

**Leanings:** As a community development practitioner, it is clear that time management, role modeling, patience to reach out to the community, and stakeholders' engagements in the project are essential elements to sustainability. It is wise to consider the target community culture and other needs that will motivate community members to join the

project. Another lesson to be learned in this process is to involve local government as a key player in the project because they will refer many of their clients who are receiving cash assistance through the state. Trust is another important factor that can also influence and engage stakeholders to play an active role. However, the project manager was trusted, which enabled him to bring good people “on the bus” to teach and empower the immigrant community by teaching them basic skills.

**Short-term outcome 3:**

- Increased access to transportation and child care.

**Output for Short-term Outcome 3:** 12 people linked to a volunteer’s driver and 5 out of 12 also linked to child care.

**Achievements:** Volunteers were able to manage the transportation by themselves and through the help of the Oasis Christian Church. Child care was being provided by good Samaritans who were inspired to help the immigrant community. Due to the high volume of volunteers, the program was successful in achieving some of the short-term outcomes in about eight (8) months time.

**Challenges:** Weather and funding have been the challenges. Since the establishment of the project, the volunteers have not been compensated for any gas mileage because, the project is still new and some funders requirement is to exist as a nonprofit up to 2-3 years progressively. Public transportation, which is becoming an issue in New Hampshire, and the weather played a negative roles and were set-backs to the project outcomes.

**Leanings:** The staff has noticed that finding grants to finance the project is a long process and requires a lot of energy and strategic planning. The staff had also observed that teaching basic skills to the elderly and immigrant communities requires patience because most of them want to participate in the workforce as soon as possible to support the families. It was indeed noticed that women are motivated to learn and grow, while

men are eager to obtain a job often without some of the basic skills because it is part their culture for men to support the family.

**Short-term outcome 4:**

- Increased access to employment sources

**Output for Short-term Outcome 4:** 12 people trained for interview preparation.

**Achievements:** The participants who had basic standard skills had been trained in interview preparation and basic computer skills. Four (4) out of twelve (12) participants had been referred to employers, but only three (3) got part-time positions. The Concord Development Center for Immigrants had been referred to family and friends by other participants, which is a good portent for another class to come. Participants also identified that once they were in school, they felt socializing with other people in the community help them to improve their language skills and expand their cultural diversity. The program is highly regarded in the community and the program is anticipating to expand and grows it services for the good of our new neighbors' immigrants.

**Challenges:** The challenge of the program has been finding grants to support it program. The requirement of the funding sources is making it difficult for the program to maintain its mission and core values. Although the Oasis Christian Church had provided the location and is still providing material support, the volunteers not are compensated financially to boost their motivations and performance. Managing multiple tasks such as providing transportation and keeping relationships with the stakeholders and other non-profits has been another challenge.

**Learnings:** As part of the planning process, the key here is to learn from mistakes and challenges. The practioners and the staff have learned that to be an established non-profit organization, the requirements of finding grants are difficult, as some donors require a

minimum of two years existing as a non-profit. Staff also identified that working with an elderly immigrant community require patience to enhance their skills for economic growth. Another key learning experience in this project was knowing the key players and encouraging the hearts of others. The staff also learned that the immigrant community is growing and public transportation is a huge problem in the state of New Hampshire. It should also be noted that all of the program participants want jobs, which means they are motivated to be self-sufficient.

## **X. Conclusions & Recommendations**

**Prospects of Attaining Intermediate and Long-Term Outcomes:** The Concord Development Center for Immigrant has not fully achieved its intermediate and long-term outcomes because only three (3) out of twelve participants are linked with employers, which possibly enables them to participate in the workforce and become financially independent for better community economic development. Those three (3) had previously attended others ESL classes in Concord, New Hampshire, and have been here long enough and have demonstrated the skills needed to be connected to employment sources. The program was also able to get those three (3) participants trained in basic computer skills, which is part of short-term outcome 1 in the logic model of increasing knowledge in basic technology.

The overall aim and objective of this project is to increase knowledge and to be able to participate in the workforce as the program anticipates. But a limited timeframe, and fact that some of the participants did not complete all the short-term outcomes to pass to the next level, which is the intermediate outcome of linking them to employers will delay the process. However, alternative action has been taken by modifying the teaching style to enhance learning. The project was able to attain short-term outcome three (3) of increasing access to transportation and child care, which enabled most of them to attend classes on the regular basis. The program was also able to prepared six (6) participates for job interviews. Additionally, other students, who did not have initial English backgrounds and could not even express themselves, are able today to distinguish between days and

express themselves with understanding despite a heavy accent, which is one of the project accomplishments.

During the community needs assessment of this project, it was clearly illustrated that refugees face several barriers to integration. Community leaders and refugees themselves were concerned about affordable housing, public transportation, and employment among other concerns. From a development point of view, reviewing policies and modifying refugees' resettlement benefits at the federal level could make a great difference in people's lives and be beneficial the community when refugees and the immigrants are empower to take control over their destiny. On the other hand, resettlements agencies would have to place refugees into decent neighborhood where they will be able to integrate and live free from crime, which will also have a positive impact on their children. Community leaders and other refugees who have lived in the United States for longer periods of time, proposed that placing the refugees into bad neighborhood can have a negative impact on their integration process. Therefore, resettlement agencies will need to place refugees into affordable and decent neighborhoods as well as linking them to program such as ESL classes, which could be a strategy for newly arriving refugees to learn the language faster and search for employment to support themselves and become the productive citizens in their communities.

**Sustainability and Replication:** When discussing sustainability and replication, maximum participation of community members, stakeholders and the volunteers are indicators that this project will indeed have a chance to succeed. As the project continue its activities in the community and employers are willing to hire participants from the program who have better English, change will take place in peoples' lives and encourage diversity.

In-addition, immigrants have a good track record of been reliable and keeping their jobs for a long period of times having good records with employers is also an easy way to link them to interested employers. The program designer has been able to successfully partner with some employers' so far. In fact, St Paul school, located in Concord, NH, donated ten (10) laptop computers to the program to help immigrants learn basic computer skills. The program staff is working assiduously to develop and bring a vibrant change to this

community with the help from the Oasis Christian Church in Concord, NH. At present, this community center has become hope for basic learning and capacity building efforts and is anticipating future growth.

**Personal Thoughts:** From a CED practitioner's point of view, and as practitioners believe in CED core values, which are participation, equity and sustainability, this project will bring hope to this community and maximum participation for the betterment of the community through an economic development approach. As practitioners, encourage people to take control over their lives in the various communities by increasing access to basic education, life skills, employment, and financial literacy towards higher living standards, all of which are the better ways to economic empowerment. As a role model and a change agent, the project designer is optimistic that maximum participation will change lives forever in this target community.

Serving as a change agent and project manager requires a lot of patience and dedication in order to bring positive change in the refugees and immigrants lives, and empowering these newly arriving immigrants who are willing to work, but challenged by limited English and cultural shock. Engaging people to adapt to change is challenging and discouraging, but once there is a trust and they get used to it, they will support a cause. To be successful in this case as a development agent, the best fit is to be willing to be outgoing, friendly, patient, creative, flexible and even drink tea with them so that they will trust the manager and share the issues they face. After completing these tasks, it will be easy to bring development tactics and recruit other participants.

While designing and implementing this project, it was appreciated by community members and embraced by Oasis Christian Church, who helped with location and material support as part of their community outreach. But the major challenge of this project has time has been funding. The day-to-day operations are run by volunteers from the Oasis Christian Church, and the project designer is looking forward to acquiring funding so that the project staff and volunteers will be compensated for their hard work.

Despite the fact that the project has no funding yet from outside sources, but the staff and the volunteers are pleased and motivated by the capacity building process of the

participants. Because there is maximum participation, the project designer and the program staff are hoping to achieve the short-term and long-term outcomes of the project, which are participation in the workforce and economic self sufficiency of the participants. Overall, a well- constructed problem tree and logic model are the keys to bringing change into the target community. It is interesting to be engaged in providing services to the refugees and immigrant community. Despite the fact that, they are challenged with numerous issues such as limited English, the recession, lack of public transportation and few jobs, they are motivated and keep hoping that one day their children will enjoy the American Dreams.

Moreover, project participants did propose that additional hours to be added to daily training, but the program staff and volunteers are unable to meet this demand because of other commitments. The participants also need more support than the project can offer and the process of meeting to all these needs requires full-time jobs, where as the project is currently run by a team of volunteers with passion and inspiration who are willing to help immigrants succeed in a diverse American society.

## **XI. Appendices**

### **A. References**

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## B. Monitoring Reports

### Appendix 1: Monitoring Report for the Month of August 2010

**Table 9:**

Activities	Dates	Status	Timeliness	Explanation for the delay	Alternative Action	Attainment of Output
Trainings	Start: August 3, 2010 End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	As planned	N/A	N/A	Target: 12 participants to be trained in basic reading, writing, and computer skills
Baby sitting	Start: August 3, 2010 End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	As planned	N/A	N/A	N/A

The monitoring report for the month of August 2010, basically explained that the training was in progress and the status also of the training was ongoing until the participants met the short-term outcomes: that is, acquiring basic reading and writing skills as planned by the team. When the program manager interviewed some the participants, it was mentioned that they were happy for the establishment of the program and they were

going to make better use of it. Therefore, it appeared that the program would be successful as planned and provide the immigrant community with a pathway to basic literacy.

## **Appendix 2: Monitoring Report for the Month of September 2010**

**Table 10:**

Activities	Dates	Status	Timeliness	Explanation for delay	Alternative Action	Attainment of Output
Trainings	Start: August 3, 2010 End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	Delayed	Trainer went for vacation	Added one more week to the completion date	Target: 12 participants to be trained in basic reading, writing, and computer skills.
Babysitting	Start: August 3, 2010 End: December 21,2010	Ongoing	As planned	N/A	N/A	

Based on the September 2010 monitoring report above, it is clear that the program is in progress which includes 12 participants to be trained in basic human capital such as reading, writing and computer skills so that they will be productive community members. Education is a power house for capacity building and will empower these participants to seek out entry level positions and even reduce fertility and mortality rate in their homes. Furthermore, the trainer was on vacation for a week, which contributed to a delay and the

extension of the completion date. Overall, two out four training sections had been completed in September 2010.

### **Appendix 3: Monitoring Report for the Month of October 2010**

**Table 12:**

Activities	Dates	Status	Timeliness	Explanation for Delay	Alternative Action	Attainment of Output
Trainings	Start: August 3, 2010  End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	As planned	N/A	N/A	Target: 12 participants trained in basic reading, writing and computer skills
Baby sitting	Start: August 3, 2010  End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	As planned	N/A	N/A	

The monitoring report for the month of October was completed by the program manager. The ongoing schedules of classes are being attended by the participants and volunteers. The participants are motivated to be part of this program, which is aiming to provide basic skills so that they will be part of the New Hampshire workforce. So far, the participants attended all the classes in October. It appeared that there is progress in

achieving the short-term outcomes because the test results were satisfactory. It is anticipated that the month of November will be completed as planned.

#### **Appendix 4: Monitoring Report for the Month of November 2010**

**Table 12**

Activities	Dates	Status	Timeliness	Explanation for Delay	Alternative Action	Attainment of Output
Trainings	Start: August 3, 2010  End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the Holiday	Extend the completion date	Target: 12 participants trained in basic reading, writing and computer skills
Baby sitting	Start: August 3, 2010  End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the holiday	Extend the completion date	

The monitoring report for the month of November indicated that there was a delayed because of the Thanksgiving holiday and all the staff, including the participants, had a break to celebrate the holiday with their families and friends. However, the staff decided to extend the completion date so that the curriculum would be covered. Overall, the schedule had been consistent and the program seemed to be working.

## Appendix 5: Monitoring Report for the Month of December 2010

**Table 13:**

Activities	Dates	Status	Timeliness	Explanation for Delay	Alternative Action	Attainment of Output
Trainings	Start: August 3, 2010  End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the Christmas & New Year Holidays	Extend the completion date	Target: 12 participants trained in basic reading, writing and computer skills
Baby sitting	Start: August 3, 2010  End: December 21, 2010	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the Christmas & New year holidays	Extend the completion date	

The monthly monitoring report of December was well conducted by the program manager, and all the activities were executed as planned. The program was closed for two weeks because of the holidays and alternative action was taken by adding another two week to the completion date. The overall December monitoring report was also delayed for one (1) week because the program manager was out sick.

## Appendix 6: Monitoring Report for the Month of January 2011

**Table 14:**

Activities	Dates	Status	Timeliness	Explanation for Delay	Alternative Action	Attainment of Output
Trainings	Start: August 3, 2010  End: July 21, 2011	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the Bad weather	Extend the completion date	Target: 12 participants trained in basic reading, writing and computer skills
Baby sitting	Start: August 3, 2010  End: July 21, 2011	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the bad weather	Extend the completion date	

## Appendix 7: Monitoring Report for the Month of February 2011

**Table 15:**

Activities	Dates	Status	Timeliness	Explanation for Delay	Alternative Action	Attainment of Output
Trainings	Start: August 3, 2010  End: July 21, 2011	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the Bad weather	Extend the completion date	Target: 12 participants trained in basic reading, writing and computer skills
Baby sitting	Start: August 3, 2010  End: July 21, 2011	Ongoing	Delayed	Closed for the bad weather	Extend the completion date	

In regard to the above mentioned monitoring report of February 2011, there were delayed because of bad weather. Due this condition, the project staff deemed it necessary to cancelled classes and extended the completion date. Overall, the program still maintain it's 12 participants and hoping for them to graduate in July 2011.



## Appendix 8: Stakeholder Interview Notes

Person interviewed: Amy Marchildon, director

Organization: Lutheran Social Services (International Services) is a non profit whose mission “In response to Christ’s Love, Lutheran Social Services of New England serves and cares for people in need.

Date: October 23, 2009

How long have you been working with refugees?

- Worked for Lutheran for about 7 years
- Worked with refugees for 14 years

How can you define the word refugee?

- UNHCR, define refugee as people have fled their countries based on persecution as follows: Race, religion, national origin, political ideology and social group.
- Also to become a refugee, one has to cross over his or her country of origin to another country and they have get in touch of UNHCR to get refugee status.

What is difference between refugee and Asylee?

- Face the same conditions.
- But refugees are process overseas through UNHCR
- While asylees are not process oversee but somehow get themselves to another country and claim asylum.
- Sometime asylees are detained through Immigration detention centers until their cases are over.
- If asylee have family tie in the U.S, they are sometime allow they live with them while the case is still pending in the immigration proceeding
- During this period, asylee are not eligible for benefits until granted asylum

How do you like working with refugee?

- It is a passion
- Drawn with people strength
- Culture and languages.

- Refugees are survival and we can even learn from them.

What are challenges have you encountered with working with refugees?

- Trying to manage refugees expectation
- They have Hollywood version of United States
- The services are limited.
- These are biggest challenges for me

What are the services provided to the refugee when they arrived?

- Core services are the first Thirty (30) days
- Sometimes called reception and placement period.
- Resettlement agencies process apartment and furnish the apartment
- With the list of requirement items in the household
- Pick up at apartment and do safety checks to make sure everything's are ok.
- Orientations
- kids enroll in schools,
- Apply for social securities.

What is the maximum time for them to receive their social security Card?

- It varies
- Sometimes two to four weeks.

Do we have enough social services for the refugees?

- Pause
- The support for refugees is fragile
- Because resettlement program is limited funding.

How long refugees receive social services and funding?

- USA department provides \$450 grant for refugee per refugee one time payment.
- Up to 90 days to make sure that money is spend.
- But that money is sometimes before refugee even get here through others items for household.
- Matched grant is available after 30 days of arrival by refugee resettlement agencies.
- Matched grant an alternative to welfare system.

- Overall, financial support is limited.

Does refugee get health benefit?

- Yes, Refugees are eligible for refugee medical Assistance (RMA).
- It is 8 months program guarantee.
- After that 8 months period it will stop even they are not working.

Is New Hampshire community welcoming to the refugee?

- Of course, they are very helpful
- The agency has over 100 volunteers.

Are there any issues in the refugee community?

- Domestic violence,
- Alcohol issues in the family.

Person interviewed: Cathy Chesley, director

Organization: Catholic Charities (New Hampshire) is a non profit whose mission by providing quality health and social service programs that heal, comfort and empower.

Date: November 4, 2009

**The purpose of this interview is to know the issues the refugees face in NH.**

1. Would you please introduce yourself?

- Cathy Chesly,
- worked for this organization for over 1 years
- And before working for Catholic charities, I did work with refugees for about 5 years as community volunteer.

2. How do you like working with this organization?

- Give an opportunity to do the work that I am very passionate about.
- Opportunity to help identify challenges
- Find solutions to make lives easier for people.

3. What are the challenges have you encountered working with refugees?

- Cultural,

- Education
- Languages, and trauma as well.

4. What dreams and hopes for the refugee?

- Most hope for a better life for their children.
- They hope for American dream of becoming employed
- Owning their own homes.
- Many also want to become citizens.

5. How do you like working with refugees?

- It is passion for me work with them.
- Learn from their cultures
- Languages and overall their dreams.

6. Who are the stakeholders?

- Refugees themselves
- Community members
- Local fire and safety people
- Community agency staff
- State refugee coordinator
- Refugee resettlement coordinator
- Tax payers.

7. What are the resources available for the refugees?

- Aid from refugee resettlement agency in cash,
- Support from local
- State welfare agencies,
- Initial apartment set up by refugee agency
- Legal support,
- ESOL classes,
- Food stamps,

- Women and children food support,
- Medical support,
- Access to public education.

8. Are the refugees productive to the society and the economic growth of NH?

- Of course, they are.
- They are eager to obtain an employment
- Become good productive community members.

9. What are needs for refugees?

- To learn English,
- Learn parenting skills in the United States (That is can not hit your children, 0 domestic violence.
- Job support,
- Connection to the family in the community,
- Knowing how use basic equipments such as stoves
- Learning how to drive as well.

10. If you need to change anything, what conditions or situation would you change?

- To see more continued education on integration;
- The resettlement agencies drop clients within eight (8) months period without enough support structures in place to move refugee to the next stage of their lives.
- Extend the 8 months period up 18 months.

## Appendix 9: Focus group Interviews

Sekou Sheriff (community volunteer), Weslly (community volunteer),

1. How long have been in this community?
  - Over 10 years
  - Over 5 years
2. What do you know about this community?
  - There are issues in the community
3. What do you think this community issues are?
  - Driver licenses,
  - public transportation,
  - Jobs, Housing,
  - Social services,
  - Limited funding,
  - No after school program for kids,
4. What are the causes of those issues?
  - Limited funding,
  - resettlement drop them soon without jobs,
  - No enough social workers
5. If you are ask to change anything, what would change?
  - Enough public transportation,
  - After school program for children,
  - Extend assistance until they full time jobs,
  - Place them in good neighborhood.
  - Not to over crowd in two bed rooms apartment.
6. Do you think refugees are productive to the society?
  - Definitively, they are.
  - They friendly, eager to be employed,
  - Become tax payers, Own a home,
  - Become United States citizens

7. What is the best aspect about refugees' life in NH?
  - To be employed and
  - self sufficient
8. What are family heads assets when comes to financial management?
  - If there no job, there are no assets for family heads.
  - financial capability classes should be provided by those resettlement agencies
9. What are obstacles related to financial management?
  - Lack of employment and
  - financial education
10. Overall, what are yours suggestions?
  - Again, benefit period should be extended,
  - Career development for those who are interested,
  - Proper housing of people,
  - Financial management literacy
  - Rapid employment.
  - Public transportation.
  - After school program for teenagers.

## **Appendix 10: Community Members Interviews**

Brown Massaquoi (former leader), Louis Yalateh (community member) Muranzy Honore (Community leader)

1. How are lives in America?
  - Fine, but too expensive.
  - We are unable to save
2. Are all yours' children in school?
  - Yes, they are in school
3. How are they doing in school?
  - Good. But, it is hard to control them because of the system.

- Working two jobs to make the end meet.
4. How was integration process with yours children?
    - It was easy for them to integrate into the United States system than us. Kids are phenomenon and they even speak better English more we the parents.
  5. What do you think this community issues are?
    - Culture, Language and the system.
  6. What are the causes of those issues?
    - The system
    - Organizations in the area do not know the refugees needs
    - No jobs
    - Limited benefit
    - Transportation system is limited.
  7. If you are ask to change anything, what would change?
    - Extend the benefit period
    - Enough social workers
    - Provide subsidize housing
    - Adequate public transportation
    - Professional training referral
    - Ease pathway to citizenship
  8. Do you think refugees are productive to the society?
    - Yes, but they do not have enough opportunity to grow and become productive
  9. What is the best aspect about refugees' life in NH?
    - Bringing diversity and High school education of the children.
  10. What are family heads assets when comes to financial management?
    - Depend on family.
    - But most of time is due to less education which leading majority to be unable to save.
  11. What are obstacles to related financial management?



- Knowledge is the key.

12. Can micro-finance credit project help to improve community needs?

- Will depend on individual need.

13. Overall, what are yours suggestions?

- Give refugee ample time learn basic skills such as computer
- Give refugees enough opportunities to integrate
- Provide financial management knowledge
- Link them to services.