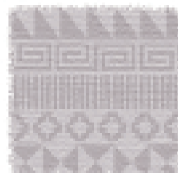
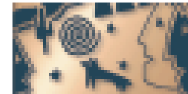
OPENING A DIALOGUE

An invitation for community action

SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND
NORTHWEST
formerly A Territory Resource (ATR)

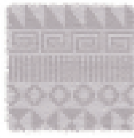


NONPROFIT
ASSISTANCE
CENTER



December 2004

Prepared for the Washington State Immigrant and Refugee Scoping Project
By Yin Ling-Leung and Jodi Nishioka



Background of partner organizations:

SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND NORTHWEST
formerly A Territory Resource (ATR)

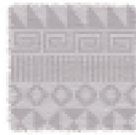
is a public foundation that supports activist, community-based organizations working for social, economic, and environmental justice in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Founded in 1977, Social Justice Fund NW (formerly ATR) is a membership-based, progressive foundation dedicated to addressing the root causes of social and environmental inequities, rather than trying to alleviate the effects of these problems.

NONPROFIT ASSISTANCE CENTER (NAC)

is a training and consulting resource working to build better communities by strengthening the organizations and leadership within them. NAC provides an array of services to assist groups to better serve their communities. NAC's culturally competent services address capacity building, leadership development and systems change and support. NAC is located in Seattle but provides services throughout Puget Sound. Priority is given to organizations that are led by and serve low-income communities, communities of color, and other communities that have less access to traditional technical assistance and funding and which have an emphasis on human services, community organizing, leadership development, and/or neighborhood improvement.

WESTERN STATES CENTER

has a mission is to build a progressive movement for social, economic, racial and environmental justice in the eight Western states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and Alaska. We work on three levels: strengthening grassroots organizing and community-based leadership; building long term, strategic alliances among community, environmental, labor, social justice and other public interest organizations; and developing the capacity of informed communities to participate in the public policy process and in elections.



OPENING A DIALOGUE -
An invitation for community action

PAGE

I. Introduction 1

II. Background on Scoping Project 3

III. Purpose, Key Assumptions and Perspective of Scoping Project 4

IV. A Brief History of Immigrants and Refugees in Washington 6

V. Demographics of Immigrants and Refugees in Washington State 8

VI. Dynamics that Affect Immigrant and Refugee Organizing and Advocacy 9

VII. Significant Issues 20

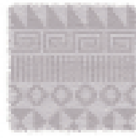
VIII. Funding for Immigrant and Refugee Communities 33

IX. Notes from Researchers 36

Appendices 38

A. Methodology
B. Key Definitions
C. Existing Collaborations
D. Management Team Description
E. Advisory Committee Description

Note: Italicized text blocks are quotes and observations taken from interviews conducted for the report.



I.

Introduction

The Nonprofit Assistance Center partnered with Social Justice Fund NW (formerly ATR) and Western States Center in December 2003 to conduct a six-month Washington Immigrant and Refugee Scoping Project. The project emerged from a shared concern that the environment for immigrant rights work in Washington had shifted dramatically. Even before 9/11, the political and social climate had been getting worse for immigrants and refugees due to the stock-market plunge and the economic recession affecting the U.S. as a whole. The aftermath of 9/11 brought many more challenges to immigrant and refugee communities in the form of hate crimes, harassment, and a deterioration of civil rights.

In this environment, the project's vision was to "scope out" the gaps, common threats and opportunities, and potential for mutual aid and collaboration in the arenas of organizing and advocacy among immigrant and refugee organizations in Washington State.

Almost 70 individuals representing more than 40 organizations working in, or on behalf of, immigrant and refugee communities throughout Washington State were interviewed individually or in groups. The interviewees were chosen to represent a cross-section of immigrant and refugee communities in Washington. *By nature of it being a "scoping" project, this report is not exhaustive but represents a sampling of voices to further the discussion of immigrant and refugee advocacy and organizing throughout the state.*

DYNAMICS THAT AFFECT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY

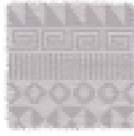
In order to support organizing and advocacy in immigrant and refugee communities, we must first recognize the dynamics that make collaborative work challenging for these diverse communities. When asked about the successes and challenges in collaborating with other groups, most interviewees talked about lack of funding and organizational capacity. However, underlying these polite responses were deeper issues such as trust, representation and accountability. Deep differences of mission, strategy and worldview among various immigrant and refugee community members also emerged.

The first section of this report reviews these complex dynamics. It raises questions about how these views and perceptions affect the ability of immigrants and refugees to work together across differences. Following are some key areas for discussion:

- Strategies for empowerment and power
- Strategies for advocacy and organizing
- The changing roles of small and large organizations
- The value of cultural capital and cultural competency
- The effects of internalized oppression
- The desire for inclusion

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

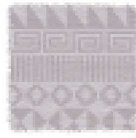
The second half of the report focuses on significant issues that cut across refugee and immigrant groups. For each of these issues the researchers discovered "shared challenges" and "areas for exploration". The "shared challenges" summarize issues that interviewees said their communities were currently facing. The "areas for exploration" are potential topics for future investigation or collaborative work.



The issue areas include:

- Immigration law enforcement
- Labor and employment
- Post-9/11 attacks
- The legal status of immigrants and refugees, undocumented and documented
- Youth, education, and parent organizing
- Health care
- Women's Leadership and Violence Against Women
- Funding for immigrant and refugee communities

The project management team hopes that this document will spark discussion among community members about what collaborative work can take place to build greater power for immigrant and refugee justice.



II.

Background on this Scoping Project

Undeniably, the events of September 11, 2001 have affected the climate for immigrants and refugees in the United States. Given current economic and political conditions, the project designers believe that opportunities to unite various immigrant and refugee groups may be greater now than during any time in recent memory. However, as anti-immigrant threats have escalated, some communities have turned inward for self-defense, many organizations lack the capacity to engage in meaningful collaboration, and there is insufficient communication among groups to overcome common challenges and work on strategic opportunities.

Since the beginning of this project, there has arisen an even greater threat to the human and civil rights of immigrants and refugees in the United States as many immigration-related policies and laws are being completely rewritten in the name of "national security".

Yet there is still a big gap between efforts to bring a national advocacy voice for immigrants and refugees and the day-to-day challenges they face in their communities locally. One advocate put it this way, "It is hard to find local people connected to a base that can work on national immigration policy and it is hard to find national immigrant rights organizations connected to a local base."

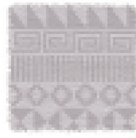
Because of this ever-shifting environment, the Nonprofit Assistance Center partnered with Social Justice Fund NW (formerly ATR) and Western States Center to conduct a six-month Washington Immigrant and Refugee Scoping Project. The project's goal is to identify gaps, common threats and opportunities, and potential for mutual aid and collaboration in the arenas of organizing and advocacy among immigrant and refugee groups in Washington State. The project organizers hope that these findings will serve as a catalyst for cross-community dialog and action.

The repressive political climate brought on by the post-9/11 Homeland Security Office has created new opportunities to unite a diverse range of immigrant and refugee communities. This climate is characterized by common political threats (like the PATRIOT Act) facing diverse communities, the reframing of public debate on immigration issues in terms of national security, intensified barriers to legalization/ citizenship, a general climate of suspicion as illustrated by new "Special Registration" requirements, the expulsion of immigrant airport workers (Operation Tarmac), and other generalized detention and deportation issues.

These conditions have compelled some immigrant and refugee community groups to engage in organizing and advocacy in new ways or in some cases for the first time ever. The situation calls for increased capacity-building support for organizations that have historically focused on service delivery, but that now might like to shift their focus to include organizing and advocacy.

Through this Scoping Project, the management team, advisory committee and researchers have created this report: to reflect accurately what was shared in the interviews; and to frame the information in a way that provokes healthy debate and discussion to increase understanding and collective action among immigrant and refugee organizations and their communities.

By nature of it being a "scope" of the existing work, this report cannot do justice to describe and credit all the work that is done by and on behalf of immigrants and refugees in Washington State. Instead, it highlights a very particular slice of activities related to immigrant and refugee community organizing and advocacy, and poses questions for further discussion and areas for further exploration.



III.

Purpose, Key Assumptions and Perspective of Scoping Project

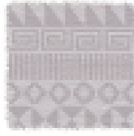
THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO:

- Find out what advocacy and organizing efforts exist within immigrant and refugee communities in Washington;
- Spark further conversations and action within and among these communities that might lead to greater power and stronger advocacy in refugee and immigrant communities; and
- Identify opportunities for collaboration to build power among these communities for social change.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT

Every research project reflects the views and biases of its designers. The following key assumptions are behind the Immigrant and Refugee Scoping Project:

- **This report is only a beginning**. Given limited resources, this report is only a sampling of refugee and immigrant advocacy and organizing efforts currently happening in Washington. This sampling provides a framework to identify key questions and spark deeper conversations among immigrant and refugee communities and their allies.
- **Greater threat, greater opportunity.** This moment in U.S. history, with its heightened attention and restrictions toward foreign-born people in the United States, is both a threat and an opportunity for immigrant and refugee communities to unite around shared concerns.
- **Solutions must come from the people who are most directly affected by these issues.** The purpose of this project is only to identify the gaps, common threats, and opportunities existing in immigrant and refugee organizing and advocacy. While this report includes topics and questions for discussion, what to do with this information will be up to affected immigrant and refugee communities to decide.
- **Collaboration and accountability are necessary for building community power.** Collaborating for the sake of collaboration is often frustrating and ineffective. However, immigrant and refugee organizations are less likely to build the power they need to create positive policy changes by working in isolation from each other. This project assumes that collaborating to address shared threats and opportunities among diverse immigrant and refugee communities will help to create more lasting and positive changes. It also assumes that organizations must be accountable to the people they represent.
- **This project believes that simply getting immigrants a seat at the table of power is not enough.** Instead we ask, "Is the table set up correctly in the first place?" In other words, organizing and advocacy work is not simply about getting a bigger piece of the "American Dream" pie. What if the pie is rotten? Many immigrants and refugees come to the U.S. from situations that make this



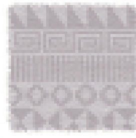
country seem like a political and economic haven. U.S. society has much to offer everyone, but this project believes that some institutions and systems need to be challenged and changed for true equality to flourish for **all** people.

- **Terms have many definitions.** For clarity and consistency we have a Key Definitions section (see Appendices) that will define the terms used for the purposes of discussion in this report. It is understood that many of these terms may be used differently in other places.

- **This report is meant to be provocative and will raise difficult questions**. This report acknowledges the value of all facets of the work to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees. At the same time, this report attempts to uncover the uncomfortable and sometimes unspoken perceptions, beliefs, and truths that stand in the way in the way of building collective power and action.

DISCUSSION:

Do you agree or disagree with the assumptions listed above?
Why or why not?



IV.

A Brief History on Immigrants and Refugees in Washington State

Washington State's history of migrants needs to be understood in the context of U.S. history, including imperialism. European migrants exercised genocidal policies toward Native Americans, enslaved Africans, annexed Mexican land and exploited foreign labor to take advantage of the rich natural resources. The terms "immigrant" and "refugee" are complicated by this history. Because of the Treaty of Hidalgo that effectively turned all the people of Mexico into US "immigrants", natives of the land were turned into "foreigners".

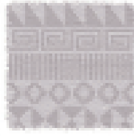
Throughout the 19th Century, the zeal to develop natural resources led to battles not only between industrialists and workers, but also between white unionists and immigrants. Thus, the "racial" nature of attacks on immigrants is long standing. The earliest immigrants of color (mostly Asian) came in the 1800's and 1900's to work in industries like railroad, logging, agriculture and fishing. Many were indentured workers who were pitted against workers trying to unionize.

In the later half of the 1800's, efforts to remove immigrants took aim at these Asian laborers. In places like Tacoma and Seattle, anti-Chinese riots, killings and other acts of violence by angry white workers led to the mass expulsion of hundreds of Chinese workers and their families. In the 1900's, Bellingham citizens rioted against a small East Indian immigrant population and, east of the Cascade Mountains Filipino immigrants in the farming town of Wapato were victims of a similar fate. In nearby Vancouver, BC, one ship of workers from India was refused landing rights and was sent back to sea to perish - demonstrating the climate of the times.

Immigrants to Washington State have been greatly affected by acts of the President, Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court, including the denial of the right to naturalized citizenship except for "free white persons" and "persons of African nativity or descent." Asian immigrants were not allowed to become naturalized citizens until 1952. In Washington State, these Asian immigrants "ineligible to citizenship" were denied rights to own land or lease property by the 1921 Alien Land Law and the 1923 amendment. As a result of community activism, the anti-alien land laws were repealed in 1966. In 1942, all Japanese immigrants and their children (including native born U.S. citizens) were forcibly removed from their homes on the West Coast, including western Washington State, and detained indefinitely in camps under armed guard, although they had not been charged with or convicted of any crime.

The history of international migration to the Pacific Northwest has also been one of compassion. From 1975, thousands of men, women and children who had languished in refugee camps following the devastation of war in Southeast Asia have come to live in Washington State. The state took a leading role in resettling Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians who were fleeing persecution, whose families had been lost, and whose homes had been destroyed. From the 1980's through the 1990's more migrants came from Africa, especially the "Horn of Africa" countries: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and the Sudan, leaving war-ravaged areas. In addition, in the 1980's Washington was one of several key states nationwide where churches and human rights groups organized to provide sanctuary to refugees from civil wars in Central America who had been ignored by the US government. In the 1990's, Iraqi and Kurdish refugees from the Middle East also arrived in Western Washington following conflicts in that region of the world.

Today, the legacy of that compassionate leadership still exists. Washington is the fourth largest refugee-receiving state in the nation. It is also the number-one state of choice for secondary migration of refu-



gees once they have arrived elsewhere in the United States. The overall foreign-born population of Washington is rapidly growing and is the third-fastest growing in the country, according to 2000 Census figures. In a recent *Seattle Times* article, Seattle was characterized as one of the key "gateway" cities for the country.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

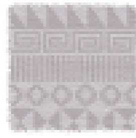
1) What experiences have immigrant and refugee organizations had with advocating across issues, ethnicities and geography? What has worked and why?

2) Is it desirable to organize cross-issue, cross-ethnicities, cross-geography? What are the benefits and what are the costs?

AREAS FOR EXPLORATION:

- Whereas Homeland Security issues have been targeting Muslim communities, the newly created Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the same time targets Latino populations in the name of counter terrorism. Yet these communities have not found common ground to do work together. Why is that? Is it class differences? Is it light-skinned vs. brown skinned differences? What can be done to bring these groups closer to work on shared interests?

- Because of the focus of this report is on more recent immigrant and refugee groups, the Scoping Project did not interview well-established immigrant civil rights groups. However, it is notable that when the post 9/11 policies started to come down on Muslim, Arab and South Asian communities, these "second or third generation" immigrants were among the first to come forward to help. What is the role of second/third generation immigrants in this work?



V.

Demographics of Immigrant and Refugees in Washington State

The characteristics of Washington State's immigrant and refugee communities, combined with the state's overall demographic picture, make immigration a key policy issue in areas like healthcare, labor, education, housing, and transportation.

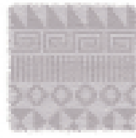
Nearly half of all foreign-born residents in Washington State arrived after 1990 and nearly 60% are non-citizens. Washington is also the fourth largest state for refugee resettlement in the country and the number one state for secondary migration of refugees. Studies show that while immigrants are a net benefit to the overall economy, recent arrivals and those who have not yet naturalized face a greater likelihood of economic hardship, and also face structural barriers to accessing assistance. The current state budget deficit and a tightening economy reinforce these challenges by making immigrant access to publicly funded programs increasingly vulnerable to attack.

In addition, the challenges facing immigrants and refugees of color are especially difficult in a state that is nearly 80% white, and where communities of color outside major urban centers are small and isolated.

Between 1990 and 2000, Washington State's total population increased by 21%, making it the 10th fastest growing state in the country. However, as seen in the chart below, growth in communities of color greatly outpaced growth in the white population. These disparities have created an easy excuse to scapegoat people of color for popular anxieties over rapid population growth, job scarcity and a declining economy. Because over 70% of the state's immigrants and refugees arrived from countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, policy attacks against immigrant and refugee communities have been frequently racialized.

FOREIGN-BORN population with region of birth reported	614,457	
Asia	239,748	39.0%
Latin America	173,870	28.3%
Europe	126,270	20.5%
Northern America	47,687	7.8%
Africa	18,775	3.1%
Oceania	8,064	1.3%

Sources: Census 2000



VI.

Dynamics that Affect Immigrant and Refugee Organizing and Advocacy

In order to support organizing and advocacy in immigrant and refugee communities, we must recognize the various dynamics that affect efforts by these communities to come together to build collective power. This section describes some of these complex dynamics and the realities and perceptions that fuel them.

STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT AND POWER

Many of the activities of the groups surveyed could be characterized as "social services". The Scoping Project intentionally sought out these groups because they are often points of contact for the most vulnerable immigrants and refugees.

Often community advocates working in social service settings see their work as **empowerment** for individuals. Social service workers refer to their work as "advocacy" because they help "advocate" for the needs of individuals in the community. Examples of this type of advocacy include providing community education so that someone has a better chance at getting a living wage job, helping someone fill in a form at a government office, or helping a parent to negotiate the school system.

Individual advocacy is much needed and a necessary part of helping immigrants and refugees survive and thrive in their new country. Some groups said they are not about "charity" and giving a person a fish to eat for one day, but that they seek to teach people to fish so they can eat for a lifetime. This type of advocacy is on one end of the advocacy spectrum, illustrated in the diagram on page 11.

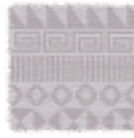
Because it serves the immediate needs of community, it is both necessary and the most common form of advocacy.

Yet social change and community organizing groups interviewed argue that this kind of individual advocacy and empowerment is not enough, that it is merely "providing services and putting on band aids" without addressing the root cause of the suffering of immigrants and refugees. These organizers argue that immigrant and refugee organizations also need to build community **power** to hold government and other institutions accountable to the needs of immigrants and refugees. Some argue that immigrant rights needs to be linked to overall transformation of an unjust social and economic system that harms everyone. Advocacy for power is on the other end of the spectrum as illustrated in the diagram on page 11.

Strategies for individual empowerment and for building community power are **not** in opposition to each other. However, when resources are limited – community organizations and their supporters find it difficult to decide where to invest their limited dollars and energy. Yet a relationship between these strategies is necessary for the well being of immigrant and refugee communities. The question of **"how"** these approaches come together is extremely challenging.

This dynamic of empowerment and power is also related to conflicting visions of justice and different end goals among immigrant and refugee organizations. The question is, "empowerment and power for what"? The culture of assimilation in the U.S. is an important issue because many groups advocate for "equal treatment" even where it means horrible treatment. Many groups talk about having access to the "American Dream" or getting their fair share of the American pie, even though the system as a whole may be very unjust even for the majority of native-born whites.

The following anecdotes illustrate the complexity of advocacy and organizing in immigrant and refugee communities and the tensions for groups that want



to bridge the empowerment and power work in immigrant and refugee communities.

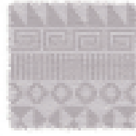
One group that has historically focused exclusively on community advocacy with immigrants finds itself in an interesting place as the group embarks on its first "service" project to help people who have had their driver's licenses suspended. The labor-intensive nature of such service programs cannot be underestimated, and has provided these organizers with new insight into the practical difficulties of combining these strategies.

One interviewee went out of his way to point out that although his agency is seen primarily as a "service" agency, he really "conducts advocacy 24/7" as a member of his community. Although he is not paid to do "advocacy," he is in fact called upon to do this work because he is seen as a community leader.

Another agency mentioned that even though they really do not have the capacity or resources to serve homeless Latinos, the local homeless shelter often calls them up and says things like, "If you don't come, we won't take them." They have to meet these immediate housing needs, but also have to advocate to their sister service agency to do the right thing and have interpreters on staff.

A large, established social service agency director mentioned that social change work by agencies like hers may go unrecognized because of the "preventative" nature of their advocacy work. Instead of waiting for a crisis to hit and waging a large, visible campaign, there is behind-the-scenes "advocacy" and communication with policy makers that helps prevent damaging legislation or administrative policy.

One immigrant woman advocate was criticized by conservative community members for taking a public stand against the sexual assaults that women suffered during religious riots in their country of origin. Disgruntled community members asked the organization's leadership, "Are you an activist organization or a service organization?" expressing their dissatisfaction that a group perceived as a service provider would take a political stand on such matters.



SPECTRUM OF ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Strategies for EMPOWERMENT

Strategies for POWER

Meeting immediate needs:

Ex: Provide shelter for immigrant woman who has experienced abuse, provide job placement of monolingual workers in living wage jobs.

Helping and educating individuals to negotiate the system:

Ex: Get information out in ESL classes, churches temples, mosques about how to get legal and law enforcement help if people experience emotional, sexual, physical violence.

Creating an environment where there is shared understanding of the need for social change.

Building a base of people with shared vision and values to address the root causes of community problems through collective power and action.

Demand policy and legislative changes that address the root cause of the issue.

Ex: Through organizing people and organizations, a coalition/network drafts and shepherds anti-human trafficking legislation that creates stronger laws and enforcement.

Changing social norms through education and building group consciousness. One method is to educate those who work with immigrants and refugees like police, government officials, administrators, and agencies.

Ex: Working with the police department to ensure there is a trained interpreter to help with taking immigrant domestic violence victim's information and to not only take the word of the English-speaking husband.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Where does your organization fit on the spectrum?

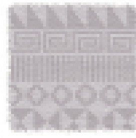
2) How does the work on one part of the spectrum relate to other parts?

3) Does your organization want to expand its work along this spectrum? What support would you need to do that?

4) What strategies work best for which organizations?

5) Are empowerment strategies alone enough? Are power strategies alone enough?

6) How could these different strategies be combined?



The Changing Roles of Small and Large Organizations

"The community is able to do advocacy and organizing. They have people, they are ready, but they need paid staff. Right now it is all volunteers and everyone works."

Larger organizations, many of them social service agencies, are seen by smaller organizations as better able to communicate and win support from mainstream funders. Some of the smaller organizations interviewed operate completely on volunteer energy or with minimal staffing. These smaller agencies and their leaders are often asked to sit at the table for funding or advocacy collaborative efforts.

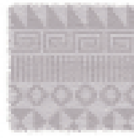
Many of these smaller organizations expressed their desire to better participate in the world of advocacy and organizing, but said that lack of resources and capacity prevented them from doing everything they wished to do. These small organizations believe that they are closest to the pain and suffering in their communities and could mobilize their constituency effectively if only they could get support to do so. One interviewee noted that when funding is only directed to the well-known and established larger agencies, many community needs and opportunities are ignored.

One well-established social service agency director backed this up by saying, ***"We need to have (them) because we can't do everything. Thus we need funders to support both large agencies like ours and smaller groups."***

At the same time, larger social service agencies, especially those whose leaders have a social justice vision, have access and credibility among their large client base for advocacy and organizing activities. There are opportunities to develop their immigrant and refugee front-line staff as leaders and organizers. Yet these larger agencies also find it hard to obtain funds to conduct their advocacy and organizing work. Their perception is that social justice funders tend to fund smaller grassroots organizations, and hesitate to see their $10,000 grant submerged under a multi-million dollar budget. Still, many of these larger agencies have gone out of their way to participate in advocacy and organizing efforts when there is a compelling issue, whether or not they have dedicated funding for such activities.

According to a couple of these larger agencies, government funding cuts in the past few years have stretched their staff thin. Their capacity to engage in advocacy or organizing has diminished.

Mutual assistance associations (MAAs) and social service agencies interviewed expressed interest in increasing their capacity for organizing and advocacy work. Some MAAs have successfully evolved into social service providers and now compete with larger mainstream social service agencies for government funding to support certain kinds of services. Previously, a local adhoc group, The Refugee Square Table was formed to provide a forum for ongoing dialogue among MAAs about this issue, and about how to rebuild the advocacy voice of MAAs. In addition to this identity crisis, MAAs face a funding crisis due to cutbacks in government grants that have been underway for several years.



"The community needs someone who can work with the community, who really understands the needs and culture of the community but who can also speak in a mainstream way to advocate effectively. We need to be able sell issues to the mainstream."

There could be two refugees that come to the shores of the United States with the same $10 in their pockets. One has what sociologists called "**cultural capital**" and the other has very little. In a few years the difference between the two might become very apparent. The migrant with an education, with class/caste privileges in their homeland, and with social connections to others would probably end up in a more secure place socially and economically in their new country. Immigrants and refugees who grew up with respect and dignity in their families and everyday lives back in their home country might be angrier and more appalled by the racism and prejudice they experience on entering in this country.

Thus, immigrant leaders who come from a place of greater privilege in their homelands often are the most effective and outspoken forces against the discrimination that immigrants and refugees experience. Their class privilege and facility with the English language give them access to funders and other power brokers and an ability to understand how the system operates.

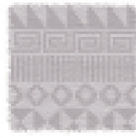
In the best of circumstances, such leaders use their talents and access to open doors for others and to support and further the overall leadership of those who have less privilege, or "cultural capital". In the worst situations, such leaders become "gatekeepers" who perpetuate the disempowerment of their own or other communities through internalized beliefs of the powerlessness of those less fortunate.

The political history, capital and access a person had in their home country can affect their current ability to organize and advocate. One activist went out of her way to share the history of another community member who had been involved with a political controversy in their shared home country. She revealed that he had been a part of a political cover up back home. This advocate wanted to make sure that we took any information from her former countryman with a grain of salt, given his spotty history. She said she would not trust him if they were in a collaboration together.

One leader described his own community as really "two communities." He said, "the first community is one that holds graduate degrees, understands the political system, does well economically, and is not visible to American society; the other community is struggling financially, does not speak English well, needs services, and is the face of my community to the American public." He sees one of the biggest challenges as getting the first community to get involved in advocating for and with the other community that is struggling.

Cultural Competency is also an important factor in effective organizing in new communities. It appears that leaders with the deepest cultural competency in their own communities are often overlooked because cultural competency is not easily recognized or valued by the mainstream. Yet that cultural competency plays a strong role in successful mobilizations. Social service providers have long recognized that and have hired such people to be on staff and to take on organizational leadership roles over time.

Cultural competency is also about having a reputation and a body of work in the community that speaks to that person's integrity. A majority of the smaller organizations interviewed said that they use the telephone very effectively in getting information out to their community networks. As one advocate described it, ***"A few phone calls to key people and the word gets out to everybody in the community."***
One organizer mentioned that a number of the Southeast Asian leaders and members of the community have anti-communist feelings and represent a certain strata of the power base within the Mutual Assistance Associations. She said that an effective organizer in this setting would have the skills and knowledge to negotiate the language and framing of issues as to not



upset these sentiments and still accomplish something together.

In doing this work it is important to recognize that not one voice ever speaks for the entire community.

For example, the more socially conservative Muslim organizations within a community may represent the majority of their community and have a more tempered read on the social and political views of the community. At the same time, there may be a smaller activist group that is ready and willing to link arms with others outside the community.

In another ethnic community, a voter registration campaign run through the churches was very effective at enrolling thousands of individuals. However, a more politically liberal/ progressive focused effort was not as successful at reaching such numbers, but was more ready to identify their interests with other people of color.

In these two situations just described, there are some lessons:

1) Groups seeking broad support within their communities might be careful not to marginalize themselves by concentrating efforts on external alliances with others who are like-minded politically rather than on education and persuasion within their own communities.

2) Groups seeking to support immigrant and refugee communities might be careful not to assume that one group speaks for all. For reaching a majority of the community members, it will be important to do a power analysis and, potentially, engage with leadership that doesn't share all or even most of one's social and political values.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

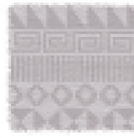
1) What are your goals as a leader in this work? Is it to get equal access to an uneven playing field? Equal results for your community? Or is it about creating a more just system overall?

2) What if your community is comfortable with "empowerment strategies" and not ready for "power strategies"?

3) Even if you are an immigrant or refugee yourself, how do you increase your own cultural competence with other immigrant and refugees groups and other ethnicities, races, and nationalities?

4) What is the role of cultural capital in organizing and advocacy?

5) What is the role of cultural competency in organizing and advocacy?



THE EFFECTS OF INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

"We need trainings to help people and organizations understand the effects of various oppressions for individuals and groups of people."

Something that was specifically mentioned several times during the interviews is the need for immigrant and refugee organizations and their leaders and staff to understand ***internalized oppression*** and how it affects advocacy and the ability to work together in their communities.

Immigrants and refugees are quick to recognize "externalized" oppression in the form of overt actions like harassment, violence and discrimination because of racial identity or immigrant status. It is not hard to rally appropriate anger and action against such oppressions as the hate crimes against Arabs, Muslims and South Asians after 9/11. However, when appropriate opposition to this oppression is not expressed, people begin to "internalize" their experiences.

Some of the interviewees proposed more workshops to undo internalized oppression among immigrants and refugees. They believe that over time people who are oppressed "internalize" the oppression they experience and begin to believe in their own inferiority and sometimes begin to adopt beliefs about the inferiority of others who are like themselves.

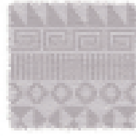
Leaders interviewed talked about how this internalized oppression plays out in terms of social change work. One interviewee said, ***"Some people believe that because they are here as immigrants they do not believe they should ask for more from the government and society. This is the life of an immigrant who doesn't speak English. But of course they want better for their kids."***

This internalized oppression about one's race, class, gender, disability, sexual identity, and/or religion affects the way immigrant and refugee leaders and community members form relationships with each other. It also affects how one community is able to work with other communities.

There are also external and internal aspects of the ways internalized oppression operates for different people. These hypothetical examples illustrate these two aspects:

1. **External:** Someone with privilege does not acknowledge his own privilege and how he may benefit from it and how others are harmed by the inequality. For example: A light-skinned immigrant who has a college education and speaks English does not recognize his privilege relative to a monolingual dark-skinned refugee. Therefore he assumes that all immigrants will be able to make it through the system without any help, and works to undo bilingual education or affirmative action policies for college entrance.

2. **Internal:** When equality and fairness are absent from one's upbringing and development, a person becomes conditioned to accept the inequality and it becomes a normal acceptable part of her everyday life. For example: A young girl is told that she is not going to amount to anything and so she does not get to attend school and she is eventually married off at a young age to another family. When she immigrates to the US with her husband, she becomes a restaurant worker. Because she is not literate in her own language, she finds it hard to learn English. She assumes she doesn't deserve decent working conditions and wages at her job, and therefore does not support other women workers who are asking to receive the same wages as their male co-workers.



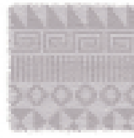
Education that provides a greater understanding of institutionalized racism and internalized oppression helps communities to build relationships with one another. It also helps people to understand how power is used or misused within organizations and in collaborative efforts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What has been the experience of immigrant and refugee organizations with internalized oppression training? How has it affected the work for organizing and advocacy?

2. How could these kinds of trainings be supported in coalition and collaboration efforts?

3. What are other internalized values, such as an emphasis on individualism, consumerism and material wealth, and anti-intellectualism?



THE DESIRE TO BE INCLUSIVE

One of the community's greatest hopes and efforts is also one of its greatest challenges. For refugees and immigrants who experience discrimination time and time again, and who are fighting to be fairly included in the political process, there is a deep desire to be inclusive, for fear of committing discrimination against others. However, this desire to be inclusive is often challenging when trying to get the work done. This section is not intended to make an argument for or against inclusion. Instead, as with all the other topics in this section, it is intended to identify the dynamics and challenges as a starting point for further discussion.

There are three areas in which collaborative efforts try to be inclusive:
1) issues
2) ethnicities and
3) geography.

ISSUES

Often organizing and advocacy efforts galvanize around a particular issue. It is rare that one issue stands alone. In reality, there are usually several closely interrelated issues as well as several more distantly related issues. Most are important in their own right. As advocates work on a particular issue and gain some success, they are often asked to work on other important issues. Tension for these advocates arises because there are so many important and critical issues to work on and limited time and resources to work on them. Often successful advocates are faced with the difficult decision of picking one important issue over another.

Some groups fear that in joining such collaborations, their own organization's issues will get lost in the shuffle. It takes a great deal of trust, patience and political vision to understand and overcome this dynamic.

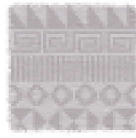
A community organizer explored ways to link post 9/11 immigrant issues with the ongoing work for immigration reform for Eastern Washington's Latino farm workers. She found the challenge of working across the mountains very difficult to overcome. "It was a challenge both for Muslims feeling under attack and for the Latino farm workers who had worked long and hard for immigration reform to let go of their immediate issues and see how their concerns are quite intertwined."

ETHNICITIES

Ideally, immigrant and refugee advocacy involves many different ethnic groups coming together to work on a variety of policy areas, that may or may not directly affect them, to create a larger political base and show strength in unity. In reality, it is logistically difficult to work with multiple ethnic groups that may have different languages, communication styles, cultural values and issues.

Another reason that advocating across ethnic groups is difficult is that relationships have not been built. Creating relationships built on trust that lay a foundation for a network that can be mobilized for advocacy takes time and effort, often years. These networks may exist within a particular community, but less often across ethnic communities.

Advocates note that it is difficult to get a single community to organize and advocate for itself, and even more difficult to mobilize a community to give of their limited resources for someone else or for some issue that does not directly affect them. Most community advocates are overburdened with work, family and community responsibilities, and barely have enough



time and energy to work on issues that directly affect their own families and communities. There are just not enough hours in a day to add on the time and energy it takes to work on an issue for another community.

Finally, the complexity of refugee and immigrant issues makes it difficult to work on multiple issues at the same time. It is easier and has proven effective for single ethnic groups to work independently on their issues. They understand their own issues and can communicate these issues to their constituencies effectively.

There are many single ethnic coalitions that have become very effective in advocating for their constituency. Although there has been some success in working across ethnicities as these groups join broader coalitions and make efforts to include other groups in their work, it doesn't come without its challenges.

GEOGRAPHY

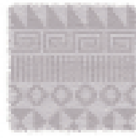
In Washington State, there is a demarcation east and west of the Cascade Mountains. Some advocates would go so far to say that Washington State is really two different states and the mountain passes are the dividing line in terms of Republican vs. Democratic leanings, rural vs. urban economies, the dominance of white populations and culture in the social, political and economic structures and even in terms of climate. It is difficult to travel between the east and west, especially in the winter, when snowy passes make driving treacherous. All of these differences between east and west make working together difficult.

One immigrant described his challenge as a long time immigrant advocate. "I need to work in a different way than my peers in Seattle. There is a 'good old boys' network set up among the growers. When we need to ask for a truckload of cantaloupes for a community fundraiser they will help us. When we need to challenge the system, we also have to do it in a way that allows us to live in the community

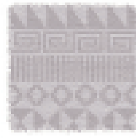
AREAS FOR EXPLORATION

There are many more dynamics that exist in immigrant and refugee communities that affect their ability to come together to effectively advocate. Because of resource and time limits the Scoping Project did not get to explore or hear more about these dynamics that were hinted at in some of the interviews. They are worthy of further exploration.

- **Youth, Adults and Elders:** What are the generational differences in views of social change? What are the youth-led efforts in immigrant and refugee communities? What would be the benefits of intergenerational efforts?
- **Established and Newer Communities:** What happens when newer immigrant and refugee communities move into areas of established communities of color? What are the challenges of coming together? What are good opportunities for shared advocacy and organizing?
- **Government and Foundation Funding:** How does government and foundation funding affect the ability or immigrants and refugee organizations to challenge institutions and government policies?
- **Eastern and Western:** What differences exist between immigrant and refugee communities in Eastern and Western Washington? How does this affect our ability to work statewide?
- **White and People of Color:** What are the barriers to embracing a "people of color" identity? What are the benefits? What would it take to find common cause with immigrants who are not people of color?



- **Paid Staff and Volunteer Organizations:** How does this affect the ability of organizations to conduct advocacy and organizing?
- **Individual Founders and Group-Founded Organizations:** Is there a difference for organizations that are founded by a group of volunteers compared to those that are founded by a single visionary leader? How does this affect advocacy and organizing effectiveness?
- **Membership/Community Driven and Issue Driven:** Some immigrant and refugee organizations are based on a shared community identity and others are organized for a specific issue or mission – how does this affect organizing and advocacy?
- **Rural and Urban:** What are the unique challenges facing rural immigrant and refugee communities? What are the challenges to working together across rural/urban divides? What are the benefits?
- **Faith-based Organizations:** What has been the role of churches, temples, mosques and places of religious practice for immigrant and refugee organizing and advocacy? What is the potential of mobilization, organizing and advocacy of immigrants and refugees through faith-based efforts?
- **Legal Advocacy Organizations** that are not led by nor staffed by immigrants and refugees. What is their relationship to organizing and advocacy on immigrant and refugee issues?



VII.

Significant Issues

This report presents immigration issues by grouping them into four different sections – **post 9/11, labor and immigration, law enforcement**, and the **legal status of immigrants and refugees** as it affects collaborations. The most important work that lies ahead for advocates and organizers is to see how these issues interrelate and are intertwined. This is important to note as groups ponder immigration reform and the collective work among diverse immigrant and refugee organizations.

IMMIGRATION LAW ENFORCEMENT

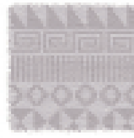
The continual changes at the agency formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), now ICE - Immigration and Customs Enforcement Department, has caused great anxiety and concern for immigrants and refugees in Washington State. Because immigration law and policy are set at the national level, local immigrant or refugee organizations often feel powerless to participate in a policy process mostly taking place in Washington, DC. The few organizations that have ongoing work on a national level are likely to be local chapters of national organizations. Thus, although many of the smaller, local organizations recognize the need for national advocacy and national organizations, there is often not enough capacity to work with national immigrant and refugee rights organizations.

Here are some of the issues mentioned in the interviews conducted:

Special Registrations: Following 9/11, the Homeland Security special registration program required foreign-born males from predominantly 25 Muslim-majority nations to register with immigration authorities or face detention and deportation. A little known provision of the program required annual re-registration. Critics viewed the re-registration requirement, and the entire registration process, as being designed to create "deportation traps" targeting Muslims and of little value in promoting national security. This brought a common cause to previously disparate Muslim/Islamic communities. In December 2003, the Department of Homeland Security ended this special registration program, but not before causing great confusion and anxiety in these communities. Some national Muslim organizations filed suit against the INS for unlawfully arresting men who had voluntarily shown up to register in Los Angeles.

Raids: According to ICE Melt, a coalition of 25 organizations in Washington State, raids on immigrant families across the country have been accelerating since April 2004 through Operation EndGame, an initiative of the Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Fugitive Operations. Under the guise of pursuing criminals and potential terrorists, raids have been conducted, in what appears to be a national campaign, in public settings, including workplaces and English-as-a-second-language classes, as well as in people's homes and commercial sites. According to organizers, this has resulted in not only detention and deportation, but also a growing fear in immigrant, especially Latino communities. Organizers with the campaign report that families are staying away from community health clinics, church services, workplaces, and summer-school classes.

A Syrian family from the Edmonds/ Lynnwood area had a father detained by ICE. He was detained for 10 months. His family, including two children ages 12 and 13, were not allowed to have any contact with him. The advocacy group has raised over $50,000 for him and it looks like it could climb to over $100,000 in attorney's fees.



Deportations: It is difficult to pin down exact numbers about the rate of deportations since 9/11. One advocate in the Latino community said that whereas there used to be around 200 deportations a month, or an average of 2,400 a year, he had heard that in the past year alone, up to 5,000 people had been deported. On the other hand, the Mexican Consulate, which gets numbers from immigration officials on repatriations, claims that deportations have actually decreased since 9/11. According to *The Seattle Times*, in 2003 nearly 3,100 men, women and children were expelled from the Washington, Oregon and Alaska region, up 25 percent from the previous year. Project researchers were not able to verify these numbers with immigration authorities. Regardless of the exact rate of deportations, the growing fear of deportation has caused refugee and immigrants to alter their behavior and cause them to not access needed public safety and social services.

Expedited Deportations: As of August 2004, Washington State, as one of many states bordering the Mexican and Canadian borders, has patrol officers who are able to hasten deportation of illegal immigrants who are not Mexican or Canadian citizens. Under this "expedited removal" plan, illegal immigrants who have been in the country less than 14 days and are arrested no more than 100 miles from either the Mexican or Canadian border will be returned to their home countries as soon as possible. This issue was not mentioned in any of the interviews, but may have implications for immigrant and refugee communities near the border.

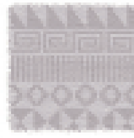
Deportation of Convicted Felons who are non-citizens: Nationally there are nearly 2,000 non-citizen Cambodian felons that have served their time but who are now under proceedings to be deported back to Cambodia due to an agreement struck by the US and Cambodia in March of 2002. This has been incredibly difficult for the families and the individuals many of whom have had no relationship with Cambodia since they were infants or youngsters.

Nearly 400 detainees who were being held indefinitely for deportation have been released in Washington State since the Supreme Court ruled against the practice last year. There is an ongoing concern for the thousands of Cambodian refugees in the United States who are still not citizens. If these non-citizen Cambodians have any legal problems, they may be deportable. In September of 2004, a group of six Seattle Cambodians were told to report to the Northwest Detention Center to be deported. According to some advocates it has been a difficult issue within the community because there is a perception that these potential deportees are "bad" criminals, although they have served their sentences and many are working and supporting families. Thus because these people are seen as having done "bad" things, it has been hard to muster sympathy from community members to mobilize around their situation.

Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma: According to *The Seattle Times*, on any given day there are approximately 500 people being held in Washington, Oregon and Alaska for immigration violations. A newly constructed detention center in Tacoma will be taking in 500 people with the ability to house up to 800 individuals from this region (Alaska, Washington, Oregon and sometimes other NW states). The Homeland Security department argues that this detention center along with the many others across the country will allow deportations to happen more efficiently.

Few organizations interviewed mentioned this center, nor did they have an analysis on how this increased capacity to detain immigrants and refugees would affect their communities. The lack of any kind of access for family members or for the media at these detention centers could mean that abuses and unjust deportations could be taking place without any accountability.

Police Harassment/Racial Profiling: The Clear Act is proposed legislation that would allow police officers to enforce immigration law. This is already being practiced by many police jurisdictions in Washington State. According to many Latino organizations interviewed, police outside of Seattle are more likely to engage in racial profiling to stop "suspicious" vehicles, and to question Latino drivers about their immigration status.



Given the historical and the current reasons why immigrants and refugees come to the United States, it is not surprising that some of the most challenging and important organizing is happening around labor and employment issues.

Undocumented Workers and Immigration Reform: A threat on the horizon is the many versions of immigration reform being floated by both Democrats and Republicans. This is especially significant for Mexicans, many of whom risk their lives to make it across the Mexican-US border. Today, Mexicans can travel to the United States and stay on 3-month temporary worker cards. According to advocates interviewed, the current Republican/Bush immigration proposal sets up a modern-day "Bracero" program that ties a worker to the employer in a form of modern-day servitude. The "Bracero" program, which lasted from 1942 to 1964, was enforced through worker contracts controlled by independent farmers associations and the Farm Bureau. The contracts were in English and the braceros signed them without understanding their full rights and the conditions of employment. When the contracts expired, the braceros were required to turn in their permits and return to Mexico. The new Bush proposal does not offer migrant workers permanent residency. In effect, the Bush proposal will divide those who work in industries/trades that issue sponsorship papers from those people who are un-sponsored. Immigrant labor advocates feel that this divide and conquer strategy is a real threat to unifying all workers. In an article in the *New York Times*, human rights advocates and enforcement officers speculate that the sharp rise of deaths in the Arizona desert has been due to the rush of migrants to get to this country before these programs are put into place.

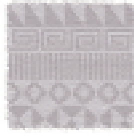
Another difficulty is the scattered and underground nature of undocumented migration to Washington from other parts of the world. This Scoping Project report could not get accurate numbers of undocumented workers for other populations such as Africans, Filipinos and Chinese. The Filipino Workers Action Center estimates that there is a sizeable Filipino undocumented population. News reports of Chinese stowaways on cargo ships confirm the "gateway" that the Port of Seattle offers. By nature, the numbers of undocumented are estimates at best.

INCREMENTAL VS. COMPREHENSIVE CHANGE IN IMMIGRATION REFORM:

For farm worker communities and the few organizations that seek to organize them, the challenge, as a couple of interviewees shared, is that each organization feels strapped with their current work and commitments and do not have the capacity to network or organize other organizations. Yet if one scratches the surface of the "capacity" explanation, there are also deeply held strategic and political differences between those who work with farm worker populations and those who work with the "everyday undocumented." Undocumented farm workers have the support of the agricultural industry and unions for immigration reform that specifically benefits farm workers. But some advocates fear specialized programs that are only for farm workers create a tiered-indentured worker population and divide workers. These advocates argue that a truly comprehensive reform package is necessary to protect all workers.

This illustrates a long-held debate for all social movements about how social change happens. Whether it is incremental ("let's get amnesty/legalization for farm workers first and use it as leverage to work for the rights of all workers") or comprehensive ("we should not settle for less than full justice and let policies create wedges that divide one kind of worker from others"). It is a difficult conversation, but a necessary one if unity is to come about for the benefit of immigrant workers, documented or otherwise.

"Unless there is a resolution among groups we won't get a true universal amnesty program. No group cares



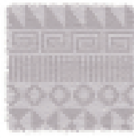
about other groups. Latinos care about Latinos. They aren't there supporting Haitians in New York and Florida and other communities. Every group is fighting for survival and they don't care which group they step on if they get what they want. We're already divided and there isn't solid support for amnesty across the board. If you give 50,000 visas to Haitians, there are 50,000 visas less for Latinos south of the border."

Airport Workers: Another post 9/11 issue is that many immigrant workers at the airport were fired/laid off under the Operation Tarmac/Aviation Security Act across the country although none of them had terrorist ties. A majority of those workers in Washington State were Filipino. Now that these jobs are federalized and the pay is better – they are mostly going to white workers. Ironically, pilots, aircraft mechanics, and even the armed National Guard soldiers posted in the airports at that time were not required to be citizens. Some local immigrant labor groups were keeping an eye on these issues, but ultimately the policy was carried out and many immigrant workers lost their jobs.

AREAS FOR EXPLORATION:

- Which one of the competing policies for immigration reform can different communities rally around? How can groups prevent these policies from creating rifts and from becoming a divisive issue?

- What prevented the local labor groups both immigrant and unions from moving forward on the issues of the immigrant workers at the airport?



POST 9/11 ATTACKS

"How do we get beyond fear? Few people are ready to risk everything. They don't want to jeopardize family for their own actions."

Attacks on temples and mosques and on people who are correctly or incorrectly visibly identified as Muslim soared immediately after 9/11. In the Seattle area, four incidents of Hate Crimes were clearly documented against Muslims and other groups immediately following 9/11. (Source: *Seattle Times)*

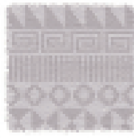
- On Sept. 13, Patrick Cunningham, 53, drove 25 miles from his Snohomish home to Seattle's Islamic Idriss Mosque. He attempted to set fire to two cars at the mosque and shot at worshippers. No one was hit, and Cunningham later pleaded guilty in the assaults.
- On that same date, Raymond Isais Jr. allegedly assaulted a Sikh taxi driver in SeaTac. Isais allegedly punched the man, pulled out tufts of his beard, knocked off his turban and called him a terrorist. He later was charged with a hate crime.
- In mid-October 2001, John Bethel entered a SeaTac motel and hit its Sikh owner with a metal cane, sending him to the hospital for 10 stitches. Bethel later was sentenced to nearly two years for the assault.
- Omar al-Farooq mosque in Mountlake Terrace was among six known places of worship nationwide that were targets of arson or attempted arson. Two local teens were charged with harassment, and one of the teens also was charged with second-degree arson.

Attacks on Immigrant Businesses: Just as individuals attacked the Sikh taxi driver and hotel owner, immigrant businesses have been targets of religious profiling by the FBI. On November 7, 2001, less than a month after the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Somali owned, Maka Mini-Mart was raided by Federal law enforcement agents. The Barakat wire transfer business within the Maka Mini-Mart was accused of sending money to Islamic terrorists. The Federal agents cleared out all the merchandise in the grocery store, including perishables, and took computer equipment from the Mini-Mart and the wire transfer businesses. Actually, the wire transfer business provided an efficient and convenient method for Somali families to send money back to their families.

When this injustice occurred, community leaders mobilized and protested this oppressive action by the government. Over 200 Somalis marched from the Mini-Mart to the immigration offices. Community members wrote letters to the Federal government. Many other refugee communities came together to protest, including the Sikh community that had also been targeted post 9/11. In addition, organizers used a live community television show to mobilize the community in their own languages.

Sympathetic legislators and community and legal organizations protested the Federal raid and appealed the seizures to Treasury Department officials. The Treasury Department later notified the business owners that they could retrieve their goods from an Auburn warehouse. Three weeks later the Mini-Mart reopened for business. Losses from the raid were considerable. Finally the court found that the two business owners were not at fault, and the Federal government was ordered to reimburse the two business owners a combined total of $100,000 for the losses from the raid.

Harassment for wearing religious or cultural symbols: The Sikh/Punjabi community concentrated in the South Seattle/Renton area is estimated to be almost 13,000. Hate crimes have been directed to the Gurudwaras (Sikh temples) and males from the community are especially vulnerable to harassment due to the distinctive turbans used to maintain their long unshorn hair and the kirpans (ceremonial daggers) that are required for practitioners of the Sikh faith.



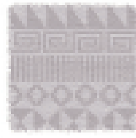
Muslim groups interviewed mentioned that similar harassment, although less physically violent, is experienced by the observant Muslim women who practice Islamic modesty by wearing a *hijab* (head scarf). Contrary to the image of submissive Muslim women, practicing their religion in the United States has become an act of bravery, because of the derisive looks, ridicule and public harassment they experience.

Employment discrimination due to religious attire: Both Sikh and Muslim groups interviewed mentioned that although abhorrent, the most challenging part of the post 9/11 harassment is not the visible and obvious hate crimes and government oppression but the more insidious and subtle employment discrimination that happens because of religious practices or Muslim sounding names. Some of these discriminatory practices are rather obvious– for example some companies (like US Airways, Holiday Inn) require a dress code that prohibits religious symbols. But one that affects more people and is a less visible act of discrimination is when qualified job applicants are simply not called for interviews due to their accent, name or dress.

AREAS FOR EXPLORATION:

- Numbers of Hate Crimes against Asians and Muslims nationally have dropped since the late 2001 backlash. It is uncertain whether it is a real drop in such crimes or an underreporting from individuals as well as less classification of these crimes by police departments across the country. As a whole hate crimes are reported and tracked less in rural areas. Washington State has many rural areas where immigrants and refugees were experiencing hate crimes even before 9/11.

- What is driving attacks against Arab, Sikh, and Muslim immigrants and refugees? Is there a connection between these attacks and attacks against other groups of immigrants and refugees now and in the past?



THE LEGAL STATUS OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS, UNDOCUMENTED AND DOCUMENTED

Refugees and Immigrants

"Institutions are more educated about dealing with immigrants than (with) refugees."

The worldview held by a person who made a choice to come to the United States versus a refugee who fled war or persecution may be very different. One refugee leader went out of his way to point out that lumping together immigrants and refugees is a disservice and not useful because their struggles vastly differ. At the same time, there is recognition that both face discrimination in being non-citizens, that racism confronts all people of color, and that xenophobia does not distinguish between refugees and immigrants.

"Most immigrant communities have never worked together. I think it is a very gradual thing and a slow process to creating bridges and having folks going to each other's events. That needs to happen."

Whereas society may paint all Arabs with the same brush, Arab refugee groups like Iraqis and Kurds share a very different reality than Arab immigrants who came with more education and capital (financial and cultural). Similarly, Asian refugees and immigrants may be grouped together by the census as a single racial category, but very few recently arrived Asians call themselves "Asian Americans." Thus, what outsiders perceive as a unified body of people may not be unified at all upon closer examination of community politics. Another example of this is that of Pacific Islanders, who face unique challenges and issues in this country. Yet until recently, census data on Pacific Islanders were lumped into the overarching category of Asians and Pacific Islanders.

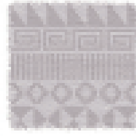
Immigrants in the Asian community sometimes see refugees as competing for their already low-wage jobs. For example, there is a perception among Chinese immigrants that Vietnamese and Chinese-Vietnamese refugees on meager welfare checks also work for cash under the table – thereby depressing wages in restaurant and other kinds of service sector jobs. This sets up a sense of competition among all who have to work these low-wage jobs.

One refugee interviewee reminded researchers that refugees and immigrants have different legal status. Refugees, especially the most recent ones, usually do not have the established organizations and support systems that more established immigrants have, and therefore their organizations need extra capacity-building support. On the other hand, refugees do not face the difficulties of undocumented immigrants.

Documented and Undocumented

Similar to the refugee-immigrant dynamic, the needs of undocumented and documented immigrants and refugees are significantly different. Some undocumented immigrants look across the divide between themselves and those with documents, and perceive that refugees enjoy advantages through their US State Department sponsorship. Likewise, some documented immigrants look across the divide and perceive undocumented immigrants as those who have "cheated" the system by not waiting their turn in that long immigration quota line.

In the Mexican community, some estimate the undocumented population could be 137,000 to 250,000 of the estimated 500,000 Mexicans in Washington State. (Source: *The Seattle Times* and the Mexican Consulate) This is a large group of Washington residents with issues and challenges that need to be considered. The numbers of Washington state immigrants from other parts of Latin America, Asian immigrants who overstay their visitor visas, and those or who may have entered the USA with the help of human smugglers was difficult to gauge because



there are few groups that work to address these populations.

In recent years there have been hints that there is a growing population of undocumented migrants from China. In a two year period from 1999-2000, an estimated 100 Chinese stowaways were discovered in cargo ships coming into the Port of Seattle.

Four Chinese people died crossing the Pacific among the 18 stowed away aboard the cargo ship Cape May in January 2000. In June of 2004, raids of two massage parlors in Bellevue revealed a sex ring with indentured sex workers from China. While Mexican undocumented workers have some infrastructure of support and advocacy in both rural and urban areas, these smaller populations of undocumented people do not have such advocates except on an ad-hoc basis.

Obviously each group's legal status affects many of their rights and privileges in the US. However, racism crosses this dichotomy and affects both undocumented and documented immigrants and refugees. Much of the post 9/11 harassment affected undocumented and documented immigrants and refugees alike.

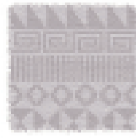
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does a person's legal status (immigrant, refugee, undocumented, documented) affect advocacy and organizing work? How does it affect collaboration?

2. How large is the undocumented population in various communities?

3. What are the best practices for overcoming those divides?

4. What opinions and beliefs do we have about these different groups? Where did these ideas of competition come from? Who do they benefit?



YOUTH, EDUCATION AND PARENT ORGANIZING

Education is a major area of advocacy for immigrants and refugees. Education and youth issues are intertwined and are among the few areas where diverse immigrant parents have found common ground to work across ethnic lines in order to accomplish shared goals.

High Drop Out Rates Among Immigrant and Refugee Youth: According to the wide range of advocacy groups working on education issues interviewed for the scoping project, there are disproportionately high drop out and suspension rates among immigrants and refugees of color. The school systems appear to be failing to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee youth. One Latino interviewee said the high-school drop out rate for Latino youth in Seattle was as high as 50%.

Immigrant parents of a senior, who was unduly expelled at the end of his senior year, were served a restraining order for trying to advocate for their son. They felt that there was no due process for his expulsion, but they could only speak their truth in Spanish and there was no one at the school to translate for them.

Intergenerational Conflicts/Generation Gaps: Immigrant parents working long hours at several jobs often are not able to grapple with their youngsters' cultural adjustment issues. Many also find modern American youth culture foreign and alienating and consequently, become very restrictive.

In interviews with Muslim and Sikh advocates, it was mentioned that youth in their communities were choosing to abandon their cultural practices because of the harassment they were facing in schools and in public for practicing their religion and culture. This causes increased strain for their parents and communities which are already feeling under siege.

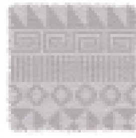
Violence/Racial Profiling of Immigrant Youth of Color: Young immigrants often congregate together in their specific language and culture groups because as new arrivals they do not speak English well enough to mix with other groups. Police mistake or profile groupings of young immigrants of color as "gangs." Immigrant youth complain of being profiled and harassed for being young people of color hanging out together.

At the same time, gangs are a reality and young immigrants join them for protection from the violence of other groups or to feel a sense of belonging in a strange land. Unfortunately, this has lead to a disproportionate number of young immigrant men and a small but growing number of young women being targeted by the juvenile justice system. Most of these refugee youth in juvenile detention are from communities that fled violence and mayhem in war-torn countries of origin.

AREAS FOR EXPLORATION:

- As the proliferation of education advocacy collaborations demonstrates (see Appendix C), new immigrants share common cause where youth and education issues are concerned. What are the elements found in issues around youth and education that can be transferred to other common concerns for immigrants and refugees?

- Given that the demographics of immigrant and refugee communities of color are heavily weighted toward those under 30, this is an important area of further investigation. Youth development, youth-led organizing and intergenerational organizing in immigrant and refugee communities are important areas to explore for collaboration.



Another important common concern among immigrants and refugees is health care and more accurately "the lack of decent, affordable and culturally competent health care."

Medicaid: Social service groups mentioned the effect of recent (2003 legislative session) administrative requirements to register for Medicaid every six months, instead of annually, the institution of co-pays for the poorest families and an increase in co-pays for low-income families. As a result, children of low-income immigrants have been having a terrible time getting access to the Medicaid insurance program for children because the paperwork and qualification process is so long and arduous. Thus many families who are qualified for such programs are foregoing the necessary checkups and preventative care. As a result, many end up resorting to much more expensive emergency care, making emergency rooms the health clinics of the poor. This is an issue that seems to cut across many ethnic groups.

In the 2004 Legislative session, advocates successfully lobbied the State Legislature to eliminate the premiums for families at the poverty level and reduce premiums for families in the 151%- 200% of the Federal poverty level. This has decreased the burden on low-income immigrant families. However the arduous administrative requirements remain in place.

Use of health care settings to enforce immigration laws: A longstanding challenge for this population is getting adequate interpretation and culturally competent health care. Benefits that exist are under constant threat. One example of the types of threats immigrants and refugees face is the recently defeated bill H.R. 3722, the Undocumented Alien Emergency Medical Assistance Amendments of 2004. These amendments would have denied hospitals and other health care providers reimbursement for uncompensated emergency care they provide to undocumented immigrants unless they report those immigrants to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The amendments would have forced providers to verify the immigration status of all uninsured patients with health care emergencies. The information health care providers would have been required to transmit to DHS included their patients' financial data, identity of employer and biometric information. Although defeated, proposals like this one, which attempt to use vital services like health care as tools to enforce immigration policies recur on a regular basis.

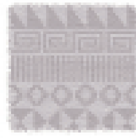
Language Accessible Care: Linguistically accessible health care is still difficult to find outside of community-based clinics and areas where immigrants and refugees are concentrated. Community clinics founded by activism and organizing in the 1960's/1970's like the International District Health Services and SEAMAR Community Health Center have become established and respected institutions in Seattle.

So while there are a number of ethnic specific health care clinics/centers doing their best, interviewees shared a number of stories concerning the difficulties they face in finding accessible services. For instance, in Spokane, a Spanish-speaking patient understood the emergency doctor's instructions for taking pills "once a day" as *"once"* (Spanish for 11) times a day.

One rural interviewee noted that although undocumented farm workers have access to a network of farm worker clinics, this is not enough. There is still a great need for organizing to win just compensation and fair treatment of all workers so that immigrant workers are able to have the same quality of health care that the general public utilizes.

AREAS FOR EXPLORATION:

- There are alliances working on low-income peoples' health care issues in the state. Are immigrant and refugee organizations and their leadership involved in these efforts in a meaningful way?



Leadership of Women: While women's leadership is critical to immigrant and refugee communities in Washington, their leadership too often goes unrecognized. This appears to be due to the informal and "behind-the-scenes" nature of women's leadership in many communities. Despite the importance of women's leadership, women report that they often do not have the respect of their male counterparts and have to fight for the recognition of issues affecting women within their own communities. One female community leader observed, ***"Women and men have different perspectives. Often women find it difficult to have a male advocate, and often men don't respect women as advocates."***

Of the over 120 organizations serving refugee and immigrant communities in Washington identified by this project, only a dozen have a focus on women's issues. About half of dozen are led by women of color who are immigrants or refugees. Of those half dozen, most are in the greater Puget Sound area.

One funding agency observed that some refugee or immigrant organizations will apply for funding for a women's project without women actually being in leadership or controlling major decisions. Although it is good to see that these organizations, mostly with male leaders, recognize the need to serve women, the lack of women's involvement in leadership is a weakness.

Violence Against Women: The most common issue identified by groups who serve women interviewed is violence against women at home and in the workplace.

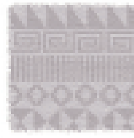
The legal issues around domestic violence are complex and difficult for many immigrants and refugees to understand. The flawed criminal justice and immigration control systems make matters worse. As a result women in immigrant and refugee communities often face great challenges to their safety and economic self-sufficiency.

In addition, there are limited culturally and linguistically appropriate services for immigrant and refugee victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Many immigrant and refugee victims are shunned from their own communities if they leave the perpetrator or are otherwise open about the abuse, and have nowhere to go once they leave their batterer. There are a few ethnic specific service and advocacy organizations in Washington serving immigrant and refugee victims of domestic violence. However, these groups report that they struggle to keep up with the growing demand for their services.

"One issue has been the fear of CPS (child protective services) and the police because they don't understand the culture. Mexicans are afraid that if the police stop you they will ask for money and if you don't give them money they will take you to jail so they just run away from the police. That's why they don't report problems. That is especially true with domestic violence and the immigration complications with that."

Also, in close-knit communities, women are often counseled to stay with the violent partner in order to avoid burdening other family members, or in order to keep the family together for the sake of the children. Shelter options for non-English-speaking women are limited and often unintentionally isolate the woman from her support network. For Muslim women it is further complicated by the need to be able to practice their faith and have access to Hallal food, which is not easily available at a typical shelter.

In Eastern Washington's farm worker communities, women have reported cases of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. Immigrant women are particularly vulnerable to workplace sexual harassment from employers and co-workers who know how desperately these women need their income for their families and for their very survival, especially if they are undocumented. Immigration officials are able to escape accountability for acts of violence against immigrant and refugee women.



One advocate explained that although funders may separate out "community organizing" from "social service" work, community workers cannot. For the women this advocate has worked with, the realities of poverty, institutional racism and both institutional and community-based gender oppression create a situation in which men (husbands, supervisors, INS detention) can use physical and sexual violence freely, and without consequence. It becomes a condition of survival to endure the suffering.

Women who come together to organize under these circumstances often prioritize immediate help (example: help getting a court order or dealing with the police), along with changing community norms (example: acceptance of DV) and challenging mainstream service agencies and institutional practices (example: law enforcement).

The latter course is the most dangerous so it is no surprise that people often rely on established service providers such as legal aid to help push that agenda. While this does not fit within the traditional models of community organizing, women often *are* organizing amongst themselves, acting quietly so as not to attract too much attention.

Finally, many informal groupings of women are organizing against domestic violence in immigrant and refugee communities. These women often have limited literacy — not just in English, but also in their native languages. Many also lack basic familiarity with non-profit concepts such as a board of directors; and (for seasonal workers) have limited ability to gather during 1/2 of the year due to the demands of work.

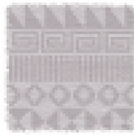
Fatalities from Domestic Violence: According to a fatality review conducted by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, immigrant women in the state of Washington die from domestic violence in higher numbers than the general population. This study suggests that fatalities are higher among immigrant women due to a combination of issues including the lack of language/culturally accessible counseling services, shelters, and police protection. There is also a tendency for police officers to relate better to and believe the English speaking male partner in marriages where the male partner is English-speaking, usually white, and the female domestic violence victim is an immigrant with limited English-speaking capacity.

"There was the case in which an Asian immigrant woman who didn't speak English finally reported on the husband's abuse and because he spoke English and she didn't he told the police that she was the aggressor and so on Mother's Day she was sent to jail."

HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

"Law enforcement, policy makers and the community as a whole don't understand the complexity of the human trafficking issue. INS is a barrier and the system has a lot of holes."

One dimension of violence against immigrant and refugee women is the issue of international human trafficking. Over the last ten years, there have been several high-profile cases of immigrant women who were held in servitude or murdered after using international matchmaking services to seek a better life through marriage to an American. Among the most well known cases are two Filipina women, Helen Clemente, who was held in servitude for three years by an ex-police officer and his wife in Redmond and Susannah Blackwell, who was murdered by her husband when she finally reported him for his abuse. These cases received national attention and brought communities together to advocate for better services for victims and for legislation on the State and Federal level to address the inherent risk of violence against women who use such services.



In Bellevue in June 2004, several Chinese sex workers were found in a form of indentured servitude to an organized sex ring. These women were transported between massage parlors nationwide.

Violence Against Women and Immigration Law: The threat of deportation of non-citizens who are arrested and convicted of assaults complicates things for undocumented women (or women in relationships with undocumented partners) in violent relationships. For example, women who call the police to stop a violent incident are unlikely to press charges against the spouse/partner if he may be deported. They may also be hesitant to call the police if they realize these threats. While battered women may want to seek out assistance, doing so may cost them and extended family back in their home country an important source of income if the perpetrator is deported.

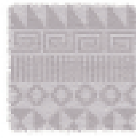
AREAS FOR EXPLORATION:

- According to the women leaders interviewed, linking immigrant women to broader women's rights work will involve a fine balancing act. These leaders worry that their activism around women's issues will fuel perceptions of their being "too outspoken or Americanized" by their communities. At the same time they do not want to perpetuate stereotypes that their culture or communities are more oppressive toward women than the American mainstream.

- What would help support immigrant and refugee women to organize across language, culture, religion and national origin?

- What leadership roles do refugee and immigrant women play on other community issues?

- How are women and men affected differently by the range of issues identified in this report?



VIII.

Funding for Immigrant and Refugee Communities

"Competition for funding is a big issue."

Funding for refugee and immigrant advocacy and organizing is a fundamental challenge. Some challenges exist for both advocacy/organizing efforts and service provision efforts, and some funding challenges are exclusive to the advocacy and organizing efforts. Underlying all of these challenges is the inherent competition for funding among providers and advocates.

Funding challenges for advocacy and organizing work:

Funding to immigrant and refugee organizations that provide services often comes with restrictions that prohibit using the funds for organizing or advocacy. Very little unrestricted money comes into the community through community-based organizations. For this reason, an organization with a relatively large budget may have very few resources available for organizing or advocacy.

One large nonprofit speculated that a social change foundation turned them down probably because they have a $2 million dollar budget. ***"I know $10,000 doesn't look like much within our budget, but we don't get much organizing money and with that small grant we are able to tap into our large existing client base to carry out some very good organizing."***

Several community organizations interviewed aspire to do more advocacy, but lack capacity. Community advocates across the board reported doing the advocacy and organizing on their own unpaid time. This causes burnout among the advocates who work within refugee and immigrant communities.

"When you start to create real change in communities – that is when the tension is created. Once those power structures are changed the nonprofits pull back from pushing because they are afraid of losing funding. Yes, you're providing services for people, but nothing is really changed in the overall condition of the people."

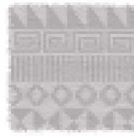
One immigrant rights advocacy group found it hard to find funding to support their community services program. Many of the calls for help they got were about individual cases of discrimination and wrongful detentions and deportations. This work neither fell neatly into a "direct services" funding model nor was it clearly a form of policy advocacy or community organizing.

Government funding cuts for services and its effect on organizing and advocacy:

Funding for immigrant and refugee services and advocacy has been shrinking over the last few years. This has affected agencies' abilities to respond to the basic needs of immigrants and refugees. Without adequate funding for the social safety net, communities are forced to concentrate resources on the basic needs of the community to the exclusion of organizing and advocacy.

Interviewees also identified benefit cuts for non-citizens as an important issue - especially cuts to elderly and disabled refugees on welfare assistance who may not speak English. Many of these refugees on disability suffer from post-traumatic stress resulting from the violence in their home countries. This appears to be especially true for groups like the Kurds, Iraqis, Cambodians, Vietnamese and Laotians whose older population witnessed widespread death and destruction.

Prior to March 2000, the Refugee Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs) received funding for social services and community development through the MAA Mini-Grant program. In April 2000, that program was changed to the Refugee Resettlement Assistance



program. Through this new program, funding for refugees became open to MAAs and other refugee service providers. For the MAAs, this means that they face greater competition for funding. Some MAAs expressed their concern about competing with larger, more mature agencies that have the ability to hire professional grant writers to write grant proposals.

Some refugees also voiced resentment that larger social service organizations run by non-refugees are able to procure better reimbursements from state government contracts, that they pay better wages and therefore cause a "brain-drain" of leadership from doing work directly through the Mutual Assistance Organizations. (See section on MAAs and Social Service Agencies above).

In the past, Washington State often had leftover federal funding that was available to the refugee and immigrant communities. However, that is no longer the case, causing an even greater shortage for refugee and immigrant services funding in 2004.

It is important to note that federal refugee funding is restricted to refugees who have lived in the U.S. for five years or less. To provide services to refugees who have been here for over 5 years, programs can request and may obtain a waiver from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement for further funding. State funding does not have the five-year-or-less restriction.

Funding challenges in general:

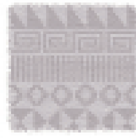
"We advocated to the State for more resources for the refugee community. The State hired a staff person to work on refugee issues. However, that staff person did not understand the needs of the community. Now we are a little afraid to advocate for what we need, because they only respond with short-term solutions."

Some immigrant groups believe there is a cultural disconnect between mainstream funders and immigrant and refugee organizations. For example, Asian Pacific Islander groups complained of being stereotyped as "model minorities" who do not need help, and are not funded for this reason. One experienced development staff member complained that funders do not understand the complexities of refugee and immigrant work. She explained that although refugee and immigrant work is multi-generational, multi-faith, multi-lingual, and multi- cultural, funders have a "one-size fits all" approach. They are often satisfied if they give funding to one type of agency (usually a large multi-constituency agency). Instead, she further explained, funders should recognize that because of the complexities of the refugee and immigrant communities, there is a need to fund many different types of agencies that serve different needs.

Smaller immigrant and refugee organizations feel they are not fully appreciated by funders for their important role as culturally competent leaders, advocates and providers. While large agencies feel they are not perceived by funders to be positioned well to engage in grassroots organizing. Among smaller organizations, there is a perception that funders are favoring larger service agencies because it is administratively cheaper to fund one large agency rather than several smaller agencies. Funders who engage in this practice may believe they are helping several communities by giving to one large agency that serves a range of ethnic communities, instead of giving to several smaller agencies that each serve their own ethnic community.

However, large and small agencies serve distinct and vital roles in the community. (See section on Organizing Dynamics of small and large organizations.) Generally speaking, large organizations can serve as cross-cultural community hubs, providing a variety of services to a variety of communities among a relatively large constituency. Smaller organizations, on the other hand, focus on a specific community and usually have a relatively strong and personal relationship with their constituencies. This intimate relationship, allows smaller organizations to mobilize their communities very effectively when called upon.

"Funders want to do good, but they just don't understand."

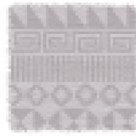


Many refugee and immigrant advocates lament that they are not given enough time by funders to achieve "outcomes." They believe that the problems are so deeply rooted that achieving measurable results takes longer than most funding terms (1 –3 years). Advocates feel that either the funding terms are too short, or the "outcomes" model does not fit their work. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 10-year investment in the Trusted Advocate program in White Center and Boulevard Park was recognized as a new and effective model for longer term granting to community-based organizations.

Like mainstream organizations, immigrant and refugee organizations struggle with the transition from a service-provision framework of measuring effort (numbers of clients served, leaders trained), to a results or outcome-based funding (what policies have they implemented or changed) which is what social justice and social service funders are increasingly looking for.

When groups receive grants, communication between the funders and communities is often difficult. Often the community organization does not have English language or writing skills, and/or familiarity with the culture of progressive and mainstream philanthropy necessary to effectively communicate their funding needs within the framework the funder has provided. Although some of the larger, more mature agencies can afford to hire fundraising or grant writing expertise, smaller organizations cannot. Many of these smaller organizations are completely run by volunteers. Even those with paid staff often have little experience in applying for funding.

Allies and funders who are unfamiliar with newer immigrant and refugee communities are apprehensive about the variety and number of organizations in each community. Often funders are unable to navigate immigrant and refugee communities effectively, and lack an adequate understanding of the issues the communities face. This is especially true of funder relations with communities that are relatively new to the country and do not have easily recognized leadership. New communities also experience growing pains, and may have several different organizations providing overlapping services to the same constituency.



IX.

Notes from Researchers

Observations about existing collaborations:

With a few exceptions, the majority of immigrant and refugee organizations and their funders are working on strategies for empowerment; very few are organizing for power. Thus the majority of immigrant and refugee organizations are in the business of providing services, legal or administrative advocacy for individuals, rather than community organizing, public policy advocacy, and electoral participation. At the same time there was a huge push in many places during the summer and fall of 2004 to mount voter registration drives because of what was at stake for immigrants and refugees in the November 2004 elections.

It remains a challenge to bring together people across regions, across ethnicity and race, across class, across refugee and immigrant, across issues, across religions and nationalities. One lament heard over and over in the interviews is that there are few opportunities to come together to discuss the big picture of what is affecting the lives of immigrants and refugees both statewide and nationally.

One common theme from the interviews is that leadership capacity of organizations across the board is stretched thin and many of the same leaders see each other over and over again at various meetings based on a funding collaborative or a specific issue area.

It may be premature to suggest that a new coalition or network of immigrants and refugees is needed. However, the Scoping Project's findings show that there is a need to support a Washington State movement where immigrants and refugees can seize opportunities and work together to address common threats and challenges and find the balance in the push and pull of the organizing dynamics discussed above.

To form one umbrella organization that cuts across all those areas is unrealistic, but there are many opportunities in light of existing threats to immigrants. It may be that groups will come together in coalition where it makes the most sense for their organizations' missions and the issues most important to their communities.

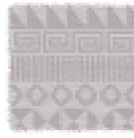
Yet the work to create coalitions is incredibly challenging. One leader pondered, "What does it mean to be in coalition?" As a strong collaborator on immigrant rights, she realized that her organization could be a leading force but also that collaboration is about sharing leadership among equals. Organizations in a coalition have to be ready and primed to be in partnership. They have to have similar capacity of thinking and ability to act on their shared issues, otherwise it is a constant pull-tug with the work they are already doing.

Training for cultural competency among the many different cultures in the refugee and immigrant communities, undoing institutional racism/internalized oppression, and leadership development for the refugee and immigrant communities is needed. However, there is a lack of leadership development and training programs and experts that have the skills, language and cultural competency to work with organizers and community leaders in immigrant and refugee communities. Any training or leadership development programs need to be culturally competent, linguistically accessible and have a helpful framework for participants to use.

Critical times/critical mass:

"We have the 4th largest refugee population in the U.S. but we aren't as strong as we could be as other places like Oregon because we are scattered."

"Now in Oregon and Washington we have increasing demographics but it is still hard to have this recognized as an important base because they are not the highest numbers in the United States. But we still have numbers. Thus community organizations have a chance to get in when the numbers are still reach-



able, whereas in places like Texas and California the numbers make it difficult to have a unified voice and to have impact."

At the same time, Washington State also has a growing proliferation of small groups in a variety of new communities – following the grand old American tradition that Alexander de Tocqueville observed in the 1800's of American organizations splintering off or founding ever more organizations with ever-specialized interests and goals. This can be a double-edged sword for it can lead to splintering immigrant and refugee rights movements and yet it is a critical opportunity to pull people together so that there is a common vision for movement work in the interest of immigrants and refugees.

Unlike the immigrants of the past, today Washington has a critical mass of immigrants and refugees that live and work here. Although Washington has the third-fastest growing immigrant population in the country, the numbers are not as daunting as they are in Texas and California.

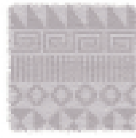
With such a large immigrant and refugee constituency base there is potential to bring about unprecedented positive change for Washington's immigrant and refugee population. More importantly, immigrant and refugee advocates and organizers have the opportunity to bridge immigrants and refugees with the struggles of native peoples, the poor, the protection of the earth, African Americans, gender justice and other intersecting and aligned movements.

This strong interest in advocacy and organizing is a good sign that a "critical mass" exists in this "critical time" for immigrants and refugees to come together to advocate and organize.

Capacity of immigrant and refugee organizations:

Although researchers spoke with almost 70 people, not all communities that were prioritized by the committee could be reached for an interview. The scope and scale of this project were intentionally restricted in order to be cost-effective and ensure a reasonably quick turn-around. We found that interviewees often were limited in their own time and capacity to be interviewed. One challenge for the project was budgeting enough time to schedule interviews with a representative sampling of groups and to find mutually good times to meet with very busy people for both individual and group interviews.

Researchers also observed that the interviewees, whether contact was made or not, played multiple roles in their communities. Often leaders were full-time staff members of an organization and they also volunteered in numerous capacities for other related organizations. Or in many volunteer-run organizations, the leaders may devote as much time to their organization as they do to their paid employment. Thus the boundaries between paid work and volunteer work are quite permeable.



APPENDIX A:

Methodology

With the guidance of a management team (made up of leaders from the three collaborating organizations) and an advisory board including immigrant and refugee community leaders, an initial list of approximately 100 organizations was identified as potential resources for the research. From that list, the researchers contacted a representative sample of groups. The Scoping Project sought to have a representative sample of leaders of different genders, different ethnicities, and various regions of Washington State. For efficiency, some interviews were with groups of people representing various organizations from the same community.

For this project we chose to interview groups that:

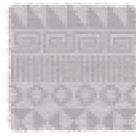
- Work with or advocate on behalf of immigrants and refugees of color
- Engage in public policy work, or that would like to do so but have not yet taken that step;
- Feel their communities are deeply affected/ hurt by current anti-immigrant/refugee policies and climate, and that are taking (or want to take) action;
- Might or might not be formally incorporated as nonprofit organizations, but that involve community leadership.

In addition, we sought groups from various parts of the state as well as a mix of established and new or emerging groups.

Although the initial plan was to interview 20 organizations, in order to achieve better representation, the interview team talked with 70 individuals who work with refugee and immigrants of color across Washington State. These interviews were conducted between December 2003 and May 2004.

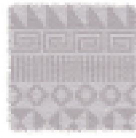
The organizations represented in our interviews include:

1) African Americans, Hispanic, Asian and Native Americans (AHANA) Business and Professional Association (Spokane)
2) African Chamber of Commerce (Seattle)
3) African Community Network (Seattle/Puget Sound)
4) Asian and Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center (Seattle)
5) Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) (Statewide)
6) Arab American Community Coalition (Puget Sound)
7) Cambodian Women's Association (Seattle)
8) CASA Latina (Seattle)
9) Cham Refugee Community (Seattle)
10) Chaya (Seattle)
11) Chinese Information and Service Center (Seattle, Bellevue)
12) Comite Pro-Amnista y Justicia Social (Seattle)
13) Communities of Refugee Empowerment Coalition (COREC) (Seattle)
14) Eastside Asians and Pacific Islanders (Bellevue)
15) El Centro de La Raza (Seattle)
16) Hate Free Zone (Seattle)
17) Helping Link (Seattle)
18) Horn of Africa (Seattle)
19) Iraqi Community Center of Seattle (Seattle)
20) Khmer Community of Seattle King County (Seattle/King County)
21) Kurdish Human Rights Watch (Kent)
22) La Prensa (Spokane)
23) Lao Community Service Office (Seattle)
24) Latino Child Care Task Force (Seattle)
25) League of United Latino Citizens (Statewide)
26) Mexican Consulate (Seattle)
27) Northwest Community Education Center – Radio KDNA (Granger/Yakima)
28) Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (Seattle)



29) PASEFIKA (White Center/South King County)
30) Refugee Federation Service Center (Seattle/King County)
31) Refugee Immigrant Parent Advocacy Network (RIPAN) (Seattle)
32) Refugee Women's Alliance (REWA) (Seattle)
33) Raising Our API Representation (ROAR) (Puget Sound)
34) Samoan PTSA (Seattle)
35) Snohomish County Refugee Forum (Snohomish County)
36) Somali Community Services Coalition (Seattle)
37) Somali Community Services of Seattle (Seattle)
38) Somali Women & Children Skills for Change (Seattle)
39) Tigrean Community Association (Seattle)
40) Tri-County Refugee Planning Retreat (Puget Sound)
41) United Farm Workers (Eastern Washington)
42) Vietnamese Senior Association (Seattle)
43) Volunteer Legal Services (Seattle)
44) Yakima County Volunteer Attorney Services (Yakima)

Based on the answers to the original set of questions, the researchers reviewed, analyzed and synthesized the information to produce an initial report. The management team and the advisory board helped to deepen the analysis and generate discussion questions in each section.



APPENDIX B:

Key Definitions

In the process of conducting the interviews it became apparent that community leaders and groups used the same words and terms differently. Given that one of the goals of this report is to find common ground for immigrants and refugees coming together, it is important to both define the terms for the purposes of this report, and also to talk about the some of the more controversial terms and implications for collective work.

Refugees – A refugee is a foreign-born person who is allowed to seek permanent refuge in the U.S. because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, as determined by the U.S. government.

Immigrant – A foreign-born person who is residing or has intentions of residing in the United States. For the purposes of this report this includes those who may have temporary visas, those who are naturalized citizens, as well as undocumented immigrants.

Undocumented: A foreign-born person residing in the US who does not have the legal documents that validate their legal status to reside in the United States.

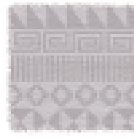
> *Different perspectives*: This report uses the term "undocumented" instead of "illegal" to describe the people who are in the United States without authorization from the US government. Although people engage in "illegal" activities and participate in "illegal immigration" it is incorrect and dehumanizing to describe a class of people as being "illegal" or to say they are "illegals."

Advocacy: Advocacy is when a person or group speaks out about issues on behalf of others. Advocates can be staff members of an organization, lawyers, policy makers, organizational leaders, or anyone who might not be directly affected by the issue, but who acts or speaks on behalf of others who are directly affected.

Organizing: the act of building a base of members who consciously work together to create and transform policies and hold policy makers accountable to their collective needs. Organizers work to make sure that people who are directly affected by the issues are at the table to speak for themselves when policies are created or need to be changed.

> *Different perspectives:* When groups were asked about their "organizing and advocacy" activities, the interviewers found that there is a broad range of activities described by interviewees as "advocacy." These ranged from a staff member helping an individual access services to participating in legislative or administrative lobbying to change a policy and laws. Many groups also mentioned their work to advocate for funding as a form of "advocacy." Interviewees used "Organizing" less often. Community organizing also encompassed a range of activities among interviewees. A few groups described their work to organize social or cultural get-togethers as a form of community organizing. In one case, collecting donations when someone died and needed to have resources for burial was also viewed as a form of organizing.

People of Color: The term "people of color" is used in this report to refer to people who do not benefit from white race privilege in the United States. While different groups of people who are not white experience widely varying forms of racial oppression, this project assumes that there is common ground for these groups to unite within a broader identity as people of color. Also, because attacks on immigrants and refugees in the United States are often racialized



to serve the interests of the dominant white population, this report mostly interviewed refugees and immigrants who are "people of color" – i.e., not part of the white race. (See Brief History Section).

"With the government social services, like DHHS, they treat Hispanics much worse than they treat Russians and Ukrainians."

Different perspectives: The term "people of color" is rarely used in countries outside of the United States, or among recent immigrants and refugees within the United States. Also, immigrants and refugees who were targeted after 9/11 included light-skinned Muslim American immigrants from the Middle East, South Asia as well as Muslims who might, in fact, identify as being white in the United States. Post-9/11 attacks have been fueled by complex factors including race, religion and national identity.

Mutual Assistance Association: A mutual assistance association ("MAA") is organized and led by refugees and provides mutual support for people within their own ethnic community. MAA is a term used by the government to define ethnically based organizations involved in refugee resettlement.

Social Service Organization: A social service agency can be any organization that is providing direct services (e.g., mental health, ESL instruction, job training, etc.) to individuals and/or families in a specific community or set of communities.

Different Perspectives: Some MAAs have grown into larger organizations that provide programs and services much like social service agencies. Most are also led and staffed by refugees themselves. Many larger social service organizations that serve immigrants and refugees have their roots in community activism. During the 1970's and 1980's, members of communities of color formed their own social service organizations, because mainstream service providers and government programs were neglecting their needs. Many of these agencies have grown and flourished. Smaller MAAs and other refugee organizations often perceive them as being "mainstream" although they continue to serve refugees and immigrants, largely because the early history of advocacy and organizing is unknown. Also, as organizations grow, they are often better able to secure larger government and foundation grants, which may further perpetuate the perception of their "mainstream" status.

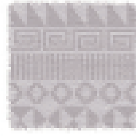
Conservative (politics): Defends traditional values, especially religious and nationalistic values and traditional social norms. Fiscal conservatives oppose or have a strong skepticism about government debt. Sometimes a synonym for right wing.

Progressive (politics): Progressive political ideas advocate for rapid social change. Associated with either / or several strains of socialism, social democracy, liberalism, or opposition to right-wing politics. Sometimes a synonym for left wing.

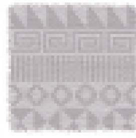
Cultural Competence: The ability or capacity to function effectively in diverse cultural situations. A culturally competent person is able to understand and interpret the thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions within or between different racial, ethnic, religious or social groups.

Cultural Capital: Concept used to explain the cultural differences that reproduce social class division. It distinguishes material wealth (financial capital) and cultural assets (cultural capital) of a particular group of people. It is believed that non-economic forces such as family background, investments in education and academic qualifications can then be converted to economic capital.

Internalized Oppression: A group targeted by oppression may "internalize" the mistreatment and the misinformation about themselves. The group begins to act on those mistaken beliefs about their inferiority through behavior and interactions with each other and repeats the oppression.



The interviews revealed that the language of advocacy and organizing is still new to many immigrant and refugee communities. The definitions above do not reflect a shared understanding among the people we interviewed, but we hope they will help to create common language to discuss advocacy and organizing in immigrant and refugee communities.



APPENDIX C:

Existing Collaborations

"The biggest challenge to doing advocacy work is coming together and creating unity."

There are collaborations of many kinds among groups working in immigrant and refugee communities. Here is a sampling of existing collaborations (listed alphabetically) that attempt to cross-racial, ethnic, language, regional, and community lines.

African Community Network was founded in 1999 and predominately made up of East African community service providers, but is open to all African communities. Its purpose is to bring service providers together to share information.

Arab American Coalition provides speakers and resources that highlight the Arab and Arab-American culture in the Greater Puget Sound area; represents the Arab-American community when meeting with public officials and other personnel in positions of authority; provides an avenue for members of the Arab-American community to communicate their concerns about their personal safety, report attacks and harassment, and to obtain information about their options for dealing with such incidents; monitors and responds to the media; actively reaches out to institutions in the Greater Puget Sound area to build partnerships.

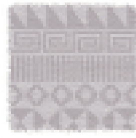
Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition (APIC) is known for its annual legislative day where thousands of Asians and Pacific Islanders go to Olympia to advocate for the concerns of APIs in Washington state. It held a first-ever voter education and gubernatorial candidates forum at the Tacoma Dome in late May 2004 where an estimated 5,000 participants attended workshops and talks. There are six regional coordinators in the State.

Communities of Refugee Empowerment Coalition (COREC) is an organization of approximately twenty refugee organizations that have made education their top issue at this time. They have also advocated for restoration of refugee services funding from the City and State. One member reports that COREC has been successful at creating a non-competitive, collaborative environment in which all groups participate as equals. See appendix for membership list.

***The Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington*:** emerged post 9/11 to provide a hotline to assist with individual detention and deportation issues and advocate for those most targeted by government repression in Seattle/King County. A year after September 11, 2001, Hate Free Zone organized the *Justice For All* hearings that brought together members of the Sikh American, Muslim American, East African, Arab American, Japanese American, South Asian and Latino communities in solidarity to testify about their experiences with harassment, hate crimes, incidents of bias and discriminatory federal policies. They have mobilized targeted communities to testify against state repression, and seek policy options that protect civil liberties. Hate Free Zone recently embarked upon a voter registration and civic engagement drive with the local chapter of the Council for American-Islamic Relations.

ICE Melt of Washington is a coalition including over 25 member organizations including labor unions, racial and economic justice organizations and religious groups. The coalition is organizing a campaign to stop ICE raids, and countering the misinformation regarding the activities of the Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that has resulted in fear and insecurity in immigrant communities. ICE Melt is also educating immigrants regarding their rights while building a strong base in immigrant communities and mobilizing that base to improve the government's treatment of immigrants.

Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride Washington State Coalition creates linkages with the struggle for civil rights and racial justice for all people. By bringing people together for this cross-country ride to share their issues, riders were able to share their stories and

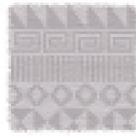


work across ethnic, state, and trades/occupations lines locally and to link with other groups nationally. Recently the Freedom Ride campaign, Casa Latina and other allied groups held a rally to bring attention to the need for immigration reform and amnesty for undocumented workers. There are over thirty organizations in the coalition.

Mutual Assistance Associations in the Puget Sound area have been organizing a series of meetings and discussions preparatory to forming a coalition to take the place of the now defunct Refugee Square Table. The Refugee Federation Service Center and the Nonprofit Assistance Center have been supporting these efforts with leadership and in-kind support. Leaders from the Laotian, Somali, Vietnamese, and Cambodian/Khmer communities have been involved to date.

Refugee Immigrant Parent Advocacy Network *(RIPAN)* is a collaborative effort of approximately twenty refugee and immigrant groups working on education issues in Seattle. RIPAN has been successful in getting Seattle Public Schools to recognize them as a significant force in the community. RIPAN was successful in persuading the Seattle school district to fund bilingual education out of the Families and Education Levy. RIPAN has recently been expanding their reach into the Shoreline and Kent school districts.

Making Connections Trusted Advocates Program is a resident engagement effort in White Center funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and coordinated by the Nonprofit Assistance Center. Multi ethnic trusted community advocates bring community members to the table, advocate for their communities, and serve as a bridge between policy makers and the community. The trusted advocates are exploring forming a self governing community council in White Center and Boulevard Park.



APPENDIX D:

Management Team Description

The Management team was comprised of representatives from the three sponsoring organizations, other knowledgeable community advocates and the consultants who researched and wrote *Opening a Dialogue – An invitation for community action.*

The Management team met regularly to guide the research and writing of *Opening a Dialogue.*

Management Team:

Vicki Asakura, *Nonprofit Assistance Center*
Judy de Barros, *Nonprofit Assistance Center*
Carina Del Rosario, *former Board member, Washington Alliance for Immigrant and Refugee Justice*
Soya Jung-Harris, *Social Justice Fund NW formerly ATR*
Alice Ito, *Board Chair, Nonprofit Assistance Center*
Lucilene Lira, *Western States Center*
Tarso Luiz Ramos, *Western States Center*
Jodi Nishioka, *Consultant and Researcher*
Yin Ling-Leung, *Consultant and Researcher*
Pang Chang, *Nonprofit Assistance Center*

APPENDIX E:

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee was comprised of members from refugee and immigrant communities. The Advisory Committee's mandate was to provide their experience and knowledge of the refugee and immigrant community when determining who should be interviewed for the project and what questions should be asked. The Advisory Committee also reviewed and commented on various drafts of the report .

The members of the Advisory Committee were:

Someireh Amirfaiz
Kush Bambrah
Aaliyah Gupta
Asha Mohammed
Ricardo Ortega
Van Sar