

Economic Independence Initiative
Refugee Farming Project Evaluation Report

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Economic Independence Initiative Refugee Farming Project

Evaluation Report

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Economic Independence Initiative Refugee Farming Project Evaluation Report Executive Summary

The Refugee Farming Project is one demonstration of the economic independence initiative supported by Burst for Prosperity. The Refugee Farming Project (RFP) is a collaborative effort to reduce poverty among very low-income Burundian and Somali Bantu families who are currently living in South King County. One aim of the Refugee Farming Project has been that refugee families could apply their experience and knowledge along with farming skills so that with a planned program of training and support they would advance economically to achieve a sufficient family income. Farming is a means of building on some of the adults' skills and capabilities to facilitate their entry into the labor market that circumvents a long path of studying English to try to acquire sufficient language proficiency in order to become employable.

Refugees who develop farming skills including marketing and selling produce are expected to transfer or apply their knowledge of small business in other career pursuits. Farming as just one example of microenterprise that has been identified as a strategy for movement from welfare to the workforce and for asset generation that reduces reliance on public assistance. This year the Burundian women have another microenterprise strategy as they have come together as a group to learn sewing skills as a means to earn income and acquire assets.

Burst for Prosperity's Economic Independence Initiative (EII) focuses on strengthening social and human capital by building individual capacity rather than relying on external aid. The Economic Independence Initiative specifically targets refugees by focusing on the leveraging of existing assets in order to accelerate integration and cultural adjustment to promote financial independence.

Anticipated outcomes for the Economic Independence Initiative

In relevant research on microenterprise development the participants' positive psychological changes along with the support from community networks have been shown to enable workers to be more successful in their efforts to start a business.¹ The anticipated long term outcomes for microenterprise in the Refugee Farming Project and the Women's Sewing Project are that the participants will develop the skills and experience the support needed to gain their financial interdependence and shared prosperity. The anticipated long term outcomes are that the refugee farmers will:

- Increase family income and move toward financial stability to decrease reliance on public assistance
- Develop skills that may be applied in future employment or entrepreneurial efforts
- Experience improved quality of life that is influenced by their growing sense of community support and access to local resources

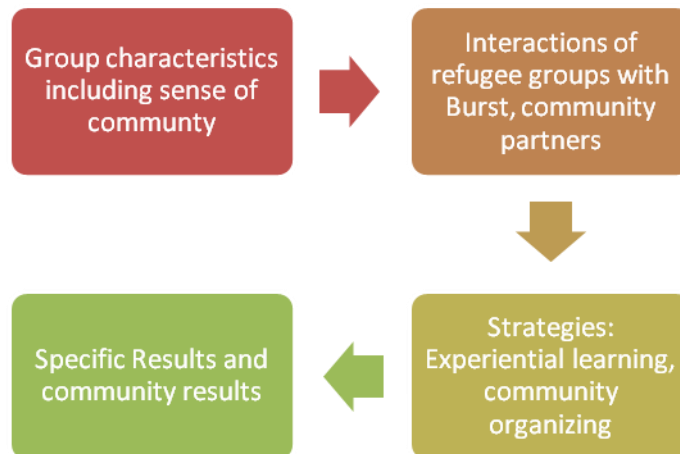
¹ Edgcomb, E..L. (2002) What makes for effective microenterprise training? Journal of Microfinance, 4(1), 99-114.

The short term or immediate outcomes are that the refugees develop skills and increase knowledge of local planting, harvesting, and marketing conditions that have two results- increased income for the farmers and increased food security with access to nutritional foods. The refugees would also increase their comfort in interactions with the host society so they develop group communication and working alliances that benefit the refugee community. The related indicators are:

- Evidence of income acquired through marketing farm produce
- Assessments of the farming effort measured by group member participation, distribution of workload, participation in marketing at multiple locations.
- Satisfaction of the farmers with access to foods for their families to eat.

Process Evaluation results

The process evaluation assessed the components of the refugee group members' characteristics and experiences, the interactions of the group members with agencies and the greater community, the strategies used to engage participants, and the results of these combined components.



The Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers engaged members of their respective communities to plant, weed, harvest, and market produce. The farmers expanded the number of their crops from last year so they sold lettuce, broccoli, zucchini, cabbage, potatoes, cilantro, carrots, beets, onions, and beans this year. The farmers sold at the farm stand on the farm property and alternated selling on a market day at Highline Community College. The refugee groups also sold produce at seven other sites or markets in Seattle or South King County sometimes selling at two different locations on one day. Marketing typically paired English speaking community members with less English proficient refugees so at least ten refugees developed language skills while selling produce to community residents.

The Burundians and the Somali Bantu farmers increased their understanding of the community farmers markets in learning that they had to apply to sell at a market and interact with a farmers market manager to set up. The refugee farmers learned more about customers' preferences by talking with them at the farm stand and the markets. The Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers were very enthusiastic in talking about how they got to know their customers and could recognize some repeat customers. The Burundian farmers who sold at the markets referred to making new friends and having customers ask them about their refugee resettlement story. One Burundian farmer explained that he learned that customers want to hear the story so he became more comfortable in telling new customers where he came from and what he liked about farming and living here in King County. Members of both refugee groups felt positive about the participation of their own community members in planting, harvesting, and selling. The market days have increased the farmers' awareness of the greater community and of the social norms surrounding local farmers markets. The farmers' growing awareness of the expectations for selling at markets helps to prepare them for ongoing interactions with local residents and for entering the labor market.

Similar outcomes but different experiences at the individual and group level

The farmers have increased social skills in talking with customers, gained knowledge about living in South King County, and developed confidence in talking with agency representatives who are outside their community. They have gained confidence to state their requests for more funding, increased self-confidence evident in talking with customers, and have enhanced feelings of belonging to a group.

The refugee farmers have increased skill in growing and selling produce, and some group members have learned about the soil, the water, and rainfall here in the northwest. Some group members have gained sufficient knowledge to recognize that they need to know more about a business plan, forming a budget, organizing, and marketing so groups of farmers are asking for expert advice.

One of the characteristics that has distinguished how the Somali Bantu and the Burundian refugees have responded to farming was the different sense of community expressed through an individual orientation among the Somali Bantu and the stronger group affiliation among the Burundians. Among the Somali Bantu, there has been a small group of workers at the farm and their actions were directed primarily by two men who were experienced farmers in Somalia. One of the farmers decided what would be planted and he used the seeder for planting some of the crops. The Somali Bantu draw on their experiences of farming for many years while in Somalia so as a group they are more self-directed to move ahead and they want to plant more crops and harvest more crops with only minimal advice or consultation.

The Burundians demonstrated a group orientation in initially discussing together what crops to plant and in discussing and selecting markets to sell produce. The members of the group also worked collectively in deciding who would be the sellers at the farm stand and at the markets. The small group of Burundians usually worked at the same days and times at the farm that was in part determined by their van transportation. The Burundians tend to convene as a group and they more readily seek some confirmation through Burst for Prosperity before they proceed. The Somali Bantu and the Burundians have not worked collectively in sharing information or setting goals but have instead carried out parallel efforts when they seeded, weeded, harvested, cleaned and sold their produce.

Project level outcomes

The refugee groups have gained a collective voice within each of their respective groups, taken action to improve their group living situation, and increased community awareness about their refugee group. The groups generally feel that the farming has been very successful in helping the Burundians and the Somali Bantu to work together in their group and to generate some income that could be shared. Members of both groups seem most satisfied in comparing how well they have done this year in comparison to last year and they cite their increase in planting, harvesting, and marketing knowledge. They refer to their success in having expanded by planting different crops this year, selling in new markets, and having developed working partnerships with members of the community through marketing at new locations. A typical day at a farmers market might generate \$180-\$300 and if the farmers brought a large supply of produce that met the customers' requests then they could potentially earn as much as \$500 in one day. The members of the group are not yet generating an income that it is sufficient to meet their needs but the farming income contributes to their family expenses. Members of the Somali Bantu group seem more intense in talking about finding new markets by developing relationships with Somali stores to buy produce and to growing produce to meet preferred customers' requests. Members of the Burundian community have expanded their market by their contacts with small Burundian communities in other states who have purchased produced from the Burundian cooperative.

Planning for the future

In the future, there still remain some slight tensions in that some farmers and team members have differing expectations as to the primary purpose of the farming project. Some farmers prefer to dedicate the farm acreage to growing crops for sale to the American customers while others want to raise crops for African customers or prefer to raise crops for their own families. More than one purpose can be achieved by using the farm land and the decisions about allocating space just need to be agreed upon to reduce any future misunderstandings.

Members of each group separately identified that they also need to learn about the timing for planting crops in order to be able to harvest more produce for a longer period during the

summer season. The management and use of the available acreage as well as the conditions for sharing the use of the space and the equipment are all issues that concern members of both refugee groups as they look ahead to next year. The Somali Bantu and the Burundian farmers expressed their uncertainty of the level and type of support that they can expect to receive next year to help them plant, harvest and market produce. Members of each group look forward to their future farming tasks and they feel they have gained very relevant knowledge and experience from their first two years that they are anxious to employ in their work.

**Economic Independence Initiative Refugee Farming Project
Evaluation Report**

**Section 1. Background and Overview of the Economic Independence Initiative
Refugee Farming Project**

The Refugee Farming Project is one demonstration of the economic independence initiative supported by Burst for Prosperity. The Refugee Farming Project (RFP) is a collaborative effort to reduce poverty among very low-income families who are currently living in South King County. One aim of the Refugee Farming Project has been that refugee families could apply their experience and knowledge acquired through developing farming skills so that through a planned program of training and support they would advance economically to achieve a sufficient family income.

Farming is a means of building on some of the adults' skills and capabilities to facilitate their entry into the labor market that circumvents a long path of studying English to try to acquire sufficient language proficiency in order to become employable. Refugees who develop farming skills including marketing and selling produce are expected to transfer or apply their knowledge of small business in other career pursuits. Farming as just one example of microenterprise that has been identified as a strategy for movement from welfare to the workforce and for asset generation that reduces reliance on public assistance. This year the Burundian women have another microenterprise strategy as they have come together as a group to learn sewing skills as a means to earn income and acquire assets.

Burst for Prosperity's Economic Independence Initiative (EII) focuses on strengthening social and human capital by building individual capacity rather than relying on external aid. The Economic Independence Initiative specifically targets refugees by focusing on the leveraging of existing assets in order to accelerate integration and cultural adjustment to promote financial independence.

The Refugee Farming Project and other microenterprises such as the women's sewing project illustrate the economic independence initiative and demonstrate multiple aims to:

- 1) build cooperative partnerships through outreach to groups of refugees who are interested in working toward their economic interdependence,
- 2) foster natural refugee group leaders in developing their leadership skills,
- 3) identify and support the preparation of refugees in small business practices to plan, plant, harvest and market produce or make products

- 4) provide several types of support and mentoring to build on the refugees skills, experiences, and knowledge,
- 5) develop community-based alliances to offer technical assistance to the refugees on land acquisition, business planning, financing, production, distribution and marketing,
- 6) link refugees with community resources that offer the potential to contribute to sustainable income.

One encompassing goal of the Refugee Farming Project is for refugees to use their existing knowledge and skills along with acquiring new competencies to achieve economic assets for individual and family income. The activity of farming is a means of acquiring economic independence and as such it may be the initial step that refugees take to obtain and increase their awareness of local American business practices. The refugees who engage in farming to acquire business experience may then follow any one of multiple paths. They may continue to develop their farming skills on larger farms or in rural settings; they may farm part-time and obtain other employment; they may become entrepreneurs or business owners in areas other than farming or food production; or they may work in any number of positions or occupations. Participating in the Refugee Farming Project may boost a refugee's confidence and self-esteem while providing opportunities to learn local customs, marketing rules, and small business regulations that will be useful for the refugee's future efforts to earn income and develop economic assets.

Expected short term and long term outcomes

In relevant research on microenterprise development the participants' positive psychological changes along with the support from community networks have been shown to enable workers to be more successful in their efforts to start a business.² The anticipated long term outcomes for microenterprise in the Refugee Farming Project and the Women's Sewing Project are that the participants will develop the skills and experience the support needed to gain their financial interdependence and shared prosperity. The anticipated long term outcomes are that the refugee farmers will:

- Increase family income and move toward financial stability to decrease reliance on public assistance
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The short term or immediate outcomes are that the refugees develop skills and increase knowledge of local planting, harvesting, and marketing conditions that have two results-

² Edgcomb, E..L. (2002) What makes for effective microenterprise training? *Journal of Microfinance*, 4(1), 99-114.

increased income for the farmers and increased food security with access to nutritional foods. The refugees would also increase their comfort in interactions with the host society so they develop group communication and working alliances that benefit the refugee community. The related indicators are:

- Evidence of income acquired through marketing farm produce
- Assessments of the farming effort measured by group member participation, distribution of workload, participation in marketing at multiple locations.
- Satisfaction of the farmers with access to foods for their families to eat.

Summary of the Refugee Farming Project in 2009-10

Burst for Prosperity (BFP) initiated the Refugee Farming Project in 2008 through communication with a group of Burundian refugees newly resettled in South King County. Following some deliberation and group planning the Burundians developed a working relationship with BFP and the community partners including the Washington State University Small Farms Program and a business development consultant. The first year of planting was in 2009 when the Burundians farmed leased acreage in Kent with support from BFP and the Somali Bantu had a P-patch plot. In the first year the Burundian and Somali Bantu planted corn, potatoes, and beans. In 2009, the farmers were delayed in getting started and had a very hot July that affected their produce but each group had a successful introduction to marketing in a local farmers market. The Somali Bantu sold at the Kent Market and the Burundians sold at the Des Moines Farmers Market.

The 2010 summer was the first year that the two refugee groups, Burundian and Somali Bantu, farmed on acreage in the same location in Auburn off 55th Ave South and South 272nd. The soil in sections of the property tended to hold water so it was moist but the property did not have a potable water source. This limited the farmers from using pipes and sprinklers but they did have a pump and accessed creek water so they watered the soil using buckets. Each of the groups planted a variety of crops, expanding from the three main crops planted last year. The Somali Bantu and the Burundians planted beans, lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes, broccoli, zucchini, cilantro, cabbage, and corn. The Somali Bantu also had purple and orange carrots and purple and white beets. The Burundians also had green onions. The tomatoes were very small and the corn did not grow well so those were not productive crops this year. The farmers also grew some traditional African crops, amaranth and aubergin.

Both groups engaged members of their respective communities to weed, harvest, and market their produce. Marketing sometimes paired English speaking community members with less English proficient refugees and stimulated some conversations with local customers. The Somali Bantu and the Burundians harvested their produce separately and alternated selling at the farm stand on the farm property and at Highline Community College market Thursdays. The

Somali Bantu were introduced to selling at Pike Place Market and to the satellite Pike Place Market held on Tuesdays at Seattle City Hall as well as the Kent and Auburn farmers markets. The Burundians also sold at the Des Moines, Burien, and Federal Way Farmers Markets and made a limited gateway into selling and shipping beans to a Burundian community out of state. Members of both refugee groups felt positive about the participation of their own members and their interaction with the encompassing community in the local farmers markets and with the cooperating community partners.

Understanding the cultural context of the farming refugees

The Refugee Farming Project and the developing Women's Sewing Group Project can not be understood without an awareness of the challenges, disruptions, and adjustments that members of both refugee groups have undergone. The refugees are continuing to encounter very unfamiliar experiences in their interactions with the greater community. There are numerous examples including confusion over the language and requirements of referring to organic produce as well as the application process to sell at farmers markets and to accept WIC vouchers that are discussed in the next section. Below is some brief background information that aids in understanding that the refugee farmers and emerging seamstresses are dealing with dramatic cultural shifts from their former lives.

Burundian and Somali Bantu refugees in this country

The responses from the Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers have varied greatly in their decisions and reactions to each dimension of farming, from planning, planting, harvesting, and marketing. To understand these differences it is helpful to consider their divergent paths, different cultural values, different languages, religions and social structures. Selected relevant information is included in this section and additional material is in Attachment 2.

The arrival of refugee families from 2004-2008 has contributed to more than 2,240 refugees in Washington in 2008 that received public assistance including Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) and food stamps. Refugee families are eligible to receive federally funded TANF benefits for 60 months but states may opt to continue benefits beyond that time. Refugee families who have lived in the United States for at least 48 months tend to typically experience multiple feelings including anxiety as they near the federally set time limit for benefits. That may motivate families to seek employment or to undertake training to procure employment. The majority of refugee families are considered poor per the federal income guidelines.³

³ For 2009, the federal poverty level is \$22,050 for a family of four. Children living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level are referred to as poor. But research suggests that, on average, families need an income of about twice the federal poverty level to meet their basic needs.

Burundian families- In 2006, 10,000 Burundian refugees were accepted in the United States. Since 2007, there are 60 Burundians in the greater Seattle area that includes families that were settled by Lutheran Relief Services in the Everett area and families settled by the International Refugee Committee in Tukwila. The Burundians who had arrived in the United States starting in 2007 were eligible to continue to receive TANF benefits but had an obligation to pay for the cost of their airfare that provided a motivation to acquire family income. The Refugee Farming Project offered an opportunity to develop an income to meet their expenses.

Adults in different families had known each other through their years of living in the refugee camps in Kenya. While there may now be an hour's driving distance that separates some families, based on information from the Burundian community representatives they still feel a closeness with each other based on their shared refugee camp experiences. There is a respect among younger adults in their 20s for the older, more experienced, and sometimes better educated elders. Younger Burundians will defer to the more mature and experienced farmers before making decisions or committing to new directions. In the camps, the younger Burundians acquired beginning English skills. Younger adults have tended to acquire an emerging competency in speaking and understanding English through attending ESL classes and finding a job since being resettled in the United States. Most of the older adults have acquired less knowledge of English and speak Kirundi among themselves.

Since their arrival in the greater Seattle area, the Burundians strove to maintain their sense of community by meeting regularly to develop a set of rules written in Kirundi that will guide their group interactions in the host society. The group agreed to meet quarterly for the purpose of celebrating their native culture and retaining their language and cultural practices so they do not become totally immersed and assimilated into the host society. Acculturation is identified by the retention of their traditional culture and values while selectively adopting aspects of the host culture such as driving, going to school, and finding a job. The Burundians have a structure of collective decision making and individuals that hear or receive information share it with other community members for discussion prior to arriving at an agreed upon decision.

Several practical facts are relevant for interacting with the Burundians. Most Burundians are Christians and initially sought and received some assistance through South King County churches. Most Burundians have acquired some English through attending classes while in the refugee camps and many of the younger Burundians continue to attend classes here. While in the refugee camps some of the young Burundians now very active with the Refugee Farming Project had been teachers to small groups of refugees. A group of younger Burundians understand English well and can read and write in English if needed while several older members of the community have been working at increasing their English vocabulary through their relationships with church volunteers. Several Burundians have or are completing college

level coursework. Not all the Burundians are familiar or experienced in writing English including produce names and prices. The Burundians typically speak Kirundi when they meet as a group.

Somali Bantu families- There have been more than 12,000 Somali Bantu who have been resettled in the United States who escaped from civil war in Somalia starting in 1990 and were displaced in refugee camps in Kenya and Tanzania.⁴ The Somali Bantu families who were part of the refugee settlement in 2004-05 had exhausted their benefits so they were feeling a push toward obtaining employment. The Refugee Farming Project was an opportunity to develop a much needed income and to potentially enter the local work force. There are two patterns in historical evidence that are relevant in understanding the sense of community evident the Somali Bantu in south King County. Historically in Somali society there were complex interactions among pastoralists and agriculturists that in part stemmed from regulating access to natural resources including land and water.⁵ The pastoralists regarded more highly than agriculturalists or farmers in the Somali caste society. The agriculturalists were referred to by outsiders as Bantu that did not necessarily correspond to speaking the Bantu language but was a distinction that marginalized them as farmers. The pastoral Somalis were the majority and the Bantus in the minority. There were regions where the Somali Bantu were treated as slaves by the Somalis who maintained strong patrilineal clans. Under those threatening conditions, many Somali Bantu focused on means of individual survival and learned patterns of not relying on others. After undergoing resettlement, some of the Somali Bantu have retained a more individual orientation and make independent decisions without seeking or relying on input from their fellow farmers or refugees.

There are several facts of practical significance for interacting with the Somalis. The Somalis are Muslim or followers of Islam. Many local Somali Bantu speak Maymay or Somali and only a few speak some Swahili acquired while in refugee camps in Tanzania. Nearly all of the local Somali Bantus who are engaged in farming are not literate in reading or writing English and did not necessarily read or write in their native language; some Somali Bantu do recognize words in labels, titles or key words on products. Among the Somali Bantu there is a small group of younger men and women who have acquired sufficient English skills to readily interpret when needed and to read documents. Most of the Somali Bantu are not familiar with dates and numbers such as tracking expenses, recording numbers to count items, or writing prices for products. The Somali Bantu were accustomed to markets where seller told prospective customers how much an item cost and the two reached an agreement on a price. Some Somali

⁴ Baker, R.E. (2008) A Somali Bantu Family Settles in Texas. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*. 16 (2), 171-172.

⁵ The historical evidence is taken from Declich, F. (2000). *Fostering Ethnic Reinvention: Gender Impact of Forced Migration on Bantu Somali Refugees in Kenya*. *Cahiers d'Etudes africaines* 157, 25-53.

Bantu, including younger community members, have taken English and continue to increase their speaking ability so they help interpret to other community members.

Overview of this report

Section 2 presents the discussion of the process evaluation of the Economic Independence Initiative with an emphasis on the implementation of the Refugee Farming Project and on the recent development of the Women's Sewing Project. Section 3 has the outcomes that are emerging from the Refugee Farming Project. The analysis in Section 3 is based on the individual, group, and project results in each of the components that define the Refugee Farming Project. Lastly, Section 4 has the keys to leadership development that have been implemented in the Economic Independence Initiative over the past two years. This section refers to the approaches that have been used by the Burst for Prosperity Community Organizer to elicit the engagement and participation of the refugees that have led to the development of leadership qualities among members of each refugee group. Leadership development is one strategy in building community capacity and it has been a concurrent focus of the Economic Independence Initiative along with the goals for the participants to work toward achieving financial interdependence and shared prosperity.

Section 2. Implementation Evaluation of the Refugee Farming Project

This section has the discussion and results of the implementation or process evaluation of the Refugee Farming Project focusing on activities in October 2009 through September 2010. The objectives of the process evaluation were:

- to document the extent to which the project has been implemented;
- to describe the engagement of community partners and the members of the two different refugee communities;
- to identify what were successful elements of the project, what components could have been implemented differently, and what findings emerged as the lessons learned.

The process evaluation questions were:

- 1) What community factors, project approaches, or refugee group characteristics were most influential in the implementation of the Refugee Farming Project this year?
- 2) What factors, program strategies, or group characteristics tended to slow or hinder implementation and were there any lessons learned on what might be done differently?
- 3) What conditions or components emerge as essential for the future implementation of the Refugee Farming Project?

Conceptual framework

The Refugee Farming Project is a comprehensive community initiative as it emphasizes the centrality of meaningful local resident participation in the change process and the importance of developing the participants' social and human capital as a condition for sustainable community change.⁶ At the core of describing community initiatives is the concept of community capacity that is a set of assets that exist among individuals and organizations that can be accessed for the greater good and for the community's ability to pursue its chosen course of action.^{7,8}

⁶ Chaskin, R.J. (2001) Building Community Capacity: A definitional Framework and Case Studies from a Comprehensive Community Initiative. *Urban Affairs Review*, 36,291-323.

⁷ Kretzman, J.P. and McKnight, J. (1993) Building community from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing community assets. Evanston,IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University.

⁸ Fawcett,S., Paine-Andrews,A.M., Francisco, V.T., et al. (1995) Using empowerment theory in collaborative partnerships for community health and development. *American Journal of Community Psychology*

The concept of community capacity is useful for evaluating the implementation of the Refugee Farming Project. There are four elements defining community capacity common in other research that are evident in the Refugee Farming Project:

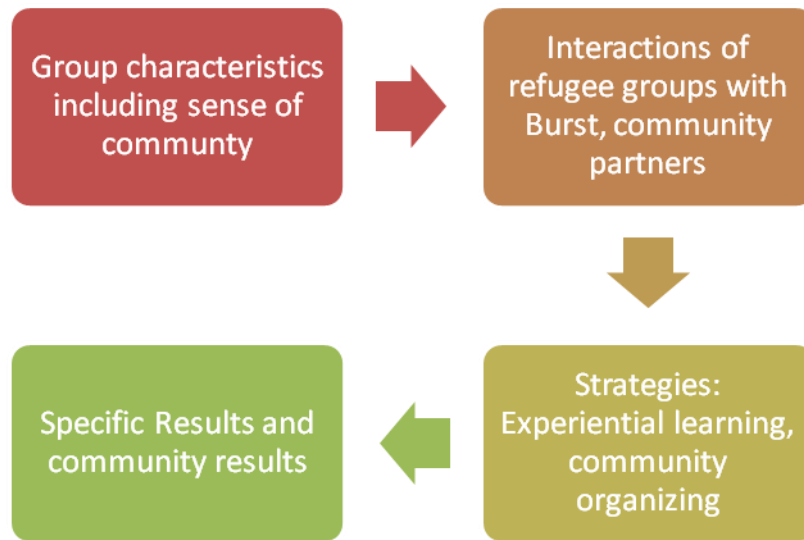
1. Existence of resources and assets that include individual skills, organizational competence, access to capital
2. Networks of interactions and relationships that can be instrumental or affective
3. Leadership that includes participant, community partner and agency direction
4. Participant support for processes of participation, collective action, or problem solving

Community capacity is the interaction of the individual and organizational resources, along with the informal and formal efforts that develop within community networks that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve the well-being of a given community.⁹ This concept of community capacity is applied in the evaluation of the Refugee Farming Project. There are four components of community capacity that are defined below.

Community capacity components defined as relevant to the Refugee Farming Project

1. Characteristics: Community characteristics and assets include the sense of community among the targeted groups, their previous experiences that have shaped their identity, the level of commitment among community members, their abilities to solve problems, and their access to resources.
2. Interactions: Levels of social agency refers to the knowledge and experiences of the individual participants, their leadership abilities, and skills to mobilize others and catalyze actions. Social agency also refers to the organizational level that includes how each of the target groups interacts with the broader community. This also refers to the organizations including Burst for Prosperity, the Washington State University county agricultural extension agent, the business development consultant, and the King County small farms program and how the group-agency relationships facilitate change
3. Strategies: There are four strategies that are relevant in examining how the Refugee Farming Project moved toward developing community capacity: experiential learning, leadership development, community organizing, and developing collaborative relationships in a network.
4. Results: There are specialized results such as growing and marketing products that are evidence of how the group characteristics including their interest and skills (component 1) blended with the individual and group interactions such as direction and instruction provided by the consultants (component 2). There are also less tangible results that occur such as increasing group knowledge and developing new group norms.

⁹ The evaluation framework used for the Refugee Farming Project builds on work authored by R.J. Chaskin on Building Community Capacity. Retrieved online: <http://uar.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/3/291>. The framework also incorporates the input received from the content experts referred to later in this report: the state university agricultural expert, the county extension agent, the farming cooperative expert, and the county farming program manager.



Surrounding context influences implementation- In addition to the above components, one other dimension is the surrounding context includes the encompassing economy that influences whether the farmers markets will be held where local residents will buy produce as well as the climate and environment that will determine if produce will even grow. The weather and the farm conditions influenced the productivity of the farm this year. The weather was cold in June and into early July without a period of long dry days in August so that slowed the start of some crops and affected the growth of others primarily the tomatoes and corn. The farmers also complained about the quality of the soil that they found to be too dry or too wet in places without having a potable water source. The farmers had a limited amount of produce to sell at each of the weekly markets as a result of having some crops, such as lettuce all ready to be harvested at the same time and not having another crop to harvest later in September. The farmers did not attend one of the markets for two weeks due to their limited amount of produce.

One striking feature of the Refugee Farming Project is the differences that are very evident in the everyday reactions and responses of the two groups, the Burundian and the Somali Bantu refugees. These differences are related to the diverse experiences that individuals have incurred when they lived in their countries of origin, while they were displaced in refugee camps, and while they have been resettled here in King County. The concise history of each of the groups was highlighted in the previous section and additional information is in Attachment 2. The characteristics of the refugees that are relevant for their engagement and participation in the Refugee Farming Project are cited here.

Component 1. Group characteristics- Refugee groups' reactions and the sense of community are distinguished by individual or group orientation

One of the characteristics that has distinguished how the Somali Bantu and the Burundian refugees have responded to farming was the different sense of community expressed through an individual orientation among the Somali Bantu and the stronger group affiliation among the Burundians. Among the Somali Bantu, there has been a small group of workers at the farm and their actions were directed primarily by two men who were experienced farmers in Somalia. One of the farmers decided what would be planted and he used the seeder for planting some of the crops. Members of the community did help with seeding and would come and work at weeding some of the crops. Those who worked on the farm doing weeding or harvesting or washing were expected to be able to share in the produce for their families. There were days when some members of the larger Somali Bantu community also took some produce from the farm as they felt entitled to do so while that offended other Somali Bantu who had been actively engaged in working on the farm. The differences in understanding about who was to reap the farm produce and other differences about who was identified as the key decision maker to assign farm tasks contributed to arguments among members of the group.

The Burundians demonstrated a group orientation in initially discussing together what crops to plant and in discussing and selecting markets to sell produce. The members of the group also worked collectively in deciding who would be the sellers at the farm stand and at the markets. The small group of Burundians usually worked at the same days and times at the farm that was in part determined by their van transportation provided by the farm manager. Members of the community who worked on the farm did on occasion take home some produce for their families. The members of the community including some individuals who did not seed or weed the crops did help wash the produce for sale at the markets. The group members did not argue among themselves while working on the farm.

These different reactions in the sense of community among the group members should be interpreted relative to their experiences that influenced their behavior. Some members of the Somali Bantu had been persecuted and put down by other Somalis while living in Somalia. There are also members of the group who lost their small businesses that contributed to the Somali Bantu looking out for themselves. This contrasts to the Burundians especially the younger generation who lived their lives in refugee camps that had varying amounts and types of resources. The Burundians were encouraged to meet among themselves to share information or resources that became available to them while in the camps. This supported an informal social structure that influences many of the Burundians to think of themselves primarily as members of a group so they think of what they can do and how that helps the group and how their community group can assist them.

Component 1. Group characteristics- Burundian and Somali Bantu refugees are similar in the level of commitment while they differ in their abilities to solve problems and their access to resources.

Level of commitment similar among Burundians and Somali Bantu- The Somali Bantu and the Burundian refugees initially came to decisions to engage community members in farming through different decision making processes. The Burundians had made contact with Burst for Prosperity and let a three month interval pass while they discussed this opportunity among themselves finally agreeing to start farming in early 2009. The Somali Bantu had independently connected with a local resident who was Somali Bantu who had assisted the community in acquiring a P-patch for growing produce and then the group established a relationship with Burst for Prosperity. In the summer of 2010 members of each group were more equal in their relationship with Burst since each group had parallel discussions and interactions revolving around accessing five acres to plan, plant and harvest. Members of both refugee groups expressed their interest, willingness and commitment to work on their respective acreage at the farm. There were typically 8-10 farmers from each of the groups actively participating in either the planting, weeding, harvesting or selling of the produce on any day of the week. The times and days that the farmers would work was variable as there were some mornings or afternoons when no one was observed in the field but on other days there would be sellers in the farm stand while there were farmers harvesting lettuce or beans.

Farmers in both refugee groups separately expressed that they found the farming to be difficult at times this year. This was due in part to several situations that they listed: the soil conditions, lack of potable water, reliance on taking public transportation, and failed plant starts in the greenhouse. The farmers felt they got a late start and the weather was not conducive so they were a little discouraged about the planting and harvesting. When the tomatoes and corn did not yield good produce to sell the Somali Bantu farmers said they were discouraged and some Burundian farmers felt that had fallen back after taking a step forward. When asked what they felt good about farmers in each refugee group indicated that they learned about marketing and selling produce, they learned to talk to customers, they learned what customers like, and they learned about composting.

The Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers were not initially familiar with the crops they were planting, weeding, harvesting and selling. The majority of the Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers had not eaten and still have not eaten or cooked most of the crops that they grow or sell. One of the lead Burundian farmers explained that they do not eat broccoli and typically do not eat lettuce, beets, carrots, or cabbage. If customers were to ask about cooking the produce or what it would taste like, such as the purple carrots or white beets, the farmers would find it hard to respond since they were not familiar with cooking or eating these colorful vegetables.

Groups were supported to develop their abilities to solve problems and to access resources- There were several decision making points that called for members of both refugee communities to arrive at a mutually agreeable decision. Since there was one farming site, the larger tools had to be shared and both groups had equal access to the limited resources such as the tools and water supply. The farmers, working with direction from Burst for Prosperity, agreed on a sharing committee with three members from each group who would meet regularly to make decisions to move along the progress on the farm in a timely way. The sharing committee seemed to address how the farmers could work using the limited number of hoes, shovels, buckets, boots, and a knife. There were days when more farmers were present so more sharing was called for and there were other days when weeding required more hand labor with fewer tools so there was less exchange and sharing required. Since the Somali Bantu speak Somali or Maymay and the Burundians speak Kirundi or some English the farmers did not readily communicate to each other on a daily basis. The Burundian farm manager and one of the Somali Bantus can talk in English when necessary.

The property at the farm had to be divided between the two groups and they agreed upon splitting up the ten acres with each group taking five acres. The groups initially found that the land tended to be wet that was not conducive to early planting. Both groups also experienced that the land owner was not respectful in interactions with the farmers. Neither group fully planted all of their five acre parcel, each group planted approximately three acres. With the space being available the farming members of each respective group did not identify any necessity of rotating crops but instead just decided to extent their planting to a previously unused piece of their acreage.

Another opportunity that called for members of the two communities to exercise their abilities to solve problems and to access resources was the farm stand. There was one farm stand at the north end of the farm on South 272nd and the groups agreed to a schedule for selling produce. The Somali Bantus and the Burundians agreed to each bring their respective produce to sell at the farm stand every other day. The groups also agreed to alternate selling at the Highline Community College on-site market day held once a week in July through August. The Burundians alternated with the Somali Bantus to sell every other week at the Highline Community College campus in Des Moines.

The two groups were similar in their response to the human resources that were offered such as the such as the experienced farmer who could help plow the acreage and the experienced farmer who could fix the tractor or rototiller. Neither of the groups took an active interest in learning how to fix the equipment for any number of reasons such as lack of familiarity or limited understanding of the process or assumption that someone else could take care of this. The Somali Bantu and the Burundians differed in their understanding about access

to resources including the financial support provided by Burst to facilitate their purchase of seeds and necessary equipment. The Somali Bantu lead farmer decided how and when to access the available funds including immediately buying tools to replace stolen tools. The Burundians accessed funds after making a decision as a group and they also waited to see if the stolen tools were to be donated before assuming they were to bear the cost for replacement. The Burundians tendency to confer among themselves contributes to their slower response to any emergent situation and that works to their benefit in their interaction with Burst for Prosperity and with the community partners.

Component 2. Interactions- The participants' interactions and experiences influence the group response to the broader community including the project partners .

Interactions with Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)- In their interactions in the encompassing community context, the Burundian farmers' time spent working on the farm applies toward meeting the required work hours to maintain their food stamp or health care benefits from DSHS. But they have little or no income and struggle to pay their apartment utility bills and other necessary expenses. Families may be on a wait list for Section 8 housing but that can take years. The Somali Bantu having been in the country longer have exhausted benefits so they also struggle to meet their basic financial needs. Several of the Burundian farmers are working at jobs as dishwashers or at Goodwill so they are on the farm for part of the day and at their other jobs in the afternoon or evening. The schedule can be grueling as one Burundian gets home from a job in downtown Seattle at 3:00 a.m. and then helps clean and sell produce on Saturday mornings starting at 6:00 a.m.

Interaction with Small Farms agent had limited effect- The Somali Bantu and the Burundian farmers had the same opportunities to attend classes, receive informal instruction, participate in role playing, and learn through working with the farming project staff members, the consultants and agency partners. The Washington State Small Farms Project Extension agent offered a Cultivating Success series of classes that were offered starting in fall 2009. There were nearly 30 Somali Bantus and a small group of Burundians who attended the weekly classes that were interpreted. Approximately one-fourth of the participants completed the class and a small number of Somali Bantu received a certificate of attendance and participation. The small group of Somali Bantu farmers who received a certificate cited it as giving them special recognition or importance so they felt entitled to tell others what to do on the farm. This caused some discontent among the non-certificated farmers who felt they had relevant knowledge and should be entitled to a certificate. The desire to have a certificate seemed to be related to gaining perceived power because the Somali Bantu are not literate so reading a certificate was not their priority.

The WSU Small Farms extension agent continued to advise both groups of farmers by visiting the farm twice weekly for a total of six hours. The Small Farms extension agent guided both groups of farmers in constructing a hoop house for growing seeds. The agent's recommendation to use peat for growing the seeds was not productive. When the seeds didn't grow well and the hoop house blew over the lead farmers in each of the refugee groups separately acknowledged that they lost confidence in taking the agent's advice. The Somali Bantu farmers built a greenhouse with poles and heavy plastic using their traditional design that gave them a space to try growing seeds which was still not very productive.

The WSU Small Farms extension agent also offered guidance to the farmers to plant seeds in rows to allow space for the rototiller as well as to trim and tie up the tomato plant leaves and pull suckers from the plants. The agent felt that his advice and his demonstration of row planting and tomato plant staking were disregarded by both the Burundians and the Somali Bantu. The small farms agent has mentioned telling a few younger farmers the preferred way to weed the plants but felt his input was ignored. Several factors could have contributed to this. After the hoop house collapse and failed seed generation, the farmers tended to hear the agent's advice but not act on it. The agent may also be perceived as being young and some of the older Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers may receive information from younger people but are not accustomed to immediately acting on it. There is also respect among younger farmers for the wisdom of the more experienced and mature farmers so the younger farmers are probably reluctant to appear to correct them so they do not pass along information they might have heard from the small farms team extension agent. Both groups of refugees have also demonstrated that they retain their traditional ways of farming such as broadcasting seeds and building a greenhouse so they resort to those traditional ways more readily than taking on new behaviors that are not seen as having a proven efficacy.

Group interactions with the small business consultant were timely and productive- The NW Cooperative Development Center farming consultant who had worked with both groups of farmers last year continued to train members of each group to develop financial records. The consultant had previously provided financial training to both the Somali Bantus and the Burundians and while they had heard the information they had not implemented what they heard. This year they became more interested in learning about how to keep records since they had more days of selling at the farm stand and at the farmers markets. The consultant provided training in tracking the income taken for each market day, recording who was selling at the market, and calculating the total amounts received from the markets and the farm stand. The Burundian Cooperative treasurer more readily understood how to create a written form to record numbers of workers, hours worked, amount of money on hand, cash received, and cash spent. The Somali Bantu typically were not used to written forms but one member of the group received the training and has developed into being the recorder to track workers, hours, and cash receipts. The Somali Bantu financial recorder works more closely with the farming business

consultant who develops the Somali Bantu notes into charts for written documentation. The Somali Bantu are organized as a Limited Liability Corporation and the Burundians are organized as a cooperative.

The farming business consultant provided tangible assistance to the farmers by arranging for an experienced farmer to plow the acreage and for another experienced farmer to repair the tractor. The farmer did the tractor repairs in the field hoping to engage the refugee farmers into learning how to upkeep their equipment but they did not actively participate either due to limited understanding of the process or to an expectation that someone else should manage the equipment. The Somali Bantu farmer who decided what crops to plant was very interested in having more than one rototiller to use next year so the farmers adapted to the use of some equipment.

The farming business consultant recommends that both groups of farmers would benefit from having daily interaction with a farming manager who could advise on soil conditions, succession planting, a harvesting schedule, equipment upkeep and maintenance, and preparation of crops for marketing. The groups of farmers similarly identified that they would like to have the input of someone knowledgeable about planting seeds in local conditions, selecting crops, irrigation, harvesting, and rotating crops. The farming business consultant has been well received and respected among members of both groups and actively engages them in learning by displaying information visually on charts and having the farmers role play situations that they are likely to encounter.

Groups interacted differently with the Marketing Assistant- The Burst for Prosperity Marketing Assistant conducted in-class sessions attended by representatives from both groups that introduced marketing concepts, presentation, customer language, and market preparation. The sessions were interpreted for the Somali Bantu and Burundian farmers and they engaged in some role playing and practice to prepare for market days. The marketing assistant had a good response from the farmers to the photographs and videos about markets. The farmers absorbed some of the content as evident in their efforts to set up their produce and to talk to customers. The Somali Bantu rely on listening since they are not literate so their retention was limited and would increase if the content was repeated. The Burundians would also increase their learning to hear the content again as they engage more when they see the immediate relevance of what is covered in class.

The farmers also had demonstrations and worked side by side with the Marketing Assistant on harvesting, washing, and preparing produce for markets. While the farmers heard specific information on marketing in the late spring, they became more interested in receptive to marketing in July-August when they were actually setting up for marketing at the farm stand

and the farmers markets. Out of class sessions enhance the farmers' application of knowledge so they could translate what they hear into production and marketing.

Component 3. *Strategies*- There were three strategies for developing community capacity in the two refugee groups: experiential learning, community organizing, and developing collaborative relationships in a network. (Leadership develop is another strategy but it is addressed separately in Section 4).

Experiential learning- The Burundians and the Somali Bantu learned from field trips to look at farms and markets and they went to nearby farmers in Auburn to observe what the other farms had. The women will gain a new perspective when they can visit shops where women sew and sell their items. Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers separately identified their interests in working with an expert on the farm who was knowledgeable in planting, irrigation, weeding and harvesting. They also stated their positive reactions to working alongside the small farms extension agent, the farming business consultant, and the marketing assistant when each of these consultants demonstrated new approaches or skills. Participants in the groups seem to learn when they can understand the rationale for their actions, can relate new knowledge to some dimension of their traditional farming, and they see the benefit of doing something different.

What was sometimes perceived by the farm team consultants to be a lack of interest among the farmers was actually the farmers preference to plant or harvest according to their traditional methods of farming. This was evident when the small farms extension agent instructed the farmers to plant seeds in rows almost two feet apart but the farmers planted seeds close together and planted beans under corn. Another example was that the farmers left beans on the ground to dry rather than harvesting soft green beans. The farmers also left the zucchini because they prefer large zucchini. These situations appeared to be the result of the farmers' lack of attention to the information they had received but were actually their purposeful decisions based on their traditional practices to broadcast seeds and their preferences to harvest and eat dried beans, dried bean greens and large zucchini.

Community organizing- The Burst for Prosperity Community Organizer has consistently shown understanding and empathy in interacting, informing, and engaging the refugees in developing their leadership qualities. As a Kenyan woman the Community Organizer has been trusted and accepted by members of both communities. She is sensitive to being sure that the communication from Burst is received as culturally acceptable to the refugee groups and anticipates the reactions from the refugees including that each group wants to be sure the other group is not receiving additional attention.

The Somali Bantu experienced challenges in identifying and maintaining a consistent leader or leaders and they went through a change that resulted in having an older farmer become the lead contact while a younger man took on the financial recording and tracking tasks. The Somali Bantus established themselves as a limited liability corporation and distanced themselves from any

affiliation with the Somali Bantu Association of Washington. The Somali Bantu went through a period of clarification with Burst for Prosperity reiterating its position to provide limited financial support so the Somali Bantu had to accept restrictions in their access to spending funds on farming equipment. The Somali Bantu have now re-gained access to their funds again and functioned with their recently identified leaders. The Somali Bantus misconceptions were in part due to their lack of literacy and their tendencies to overstate their understanding of situations when they were not really clear on what was expected of them.

The farm manager who is Burundian interacts primarily with the Burundians including driving them to the farm but he is also available to be the contact person if any concerns are expressed by the land owner. Most Burundians take the bus and leave the farm in the afternoon to attend English classes. The Burundians rely on the farm manager for transportation to the farmers markets so the Burst for Prosperity van is in heavy use to transport farmers to the farm and then to the market with a return trip to set up for another market. The community could use a volunteer driver to help transport sellers with produce who set up for markets as well as volunteers who could help the refugee farmers in selling at the markets.

There are more Somali Bantu who are able to drive to the farm and they have been able to drive to the markets. The Somali Bantus showed up late to set up at a farmers market and did not appear on two days when they were expected. The Somali Bantu have on average done one farmers market a week while the Burundians have sold at three including two sites, Des Moines and Federal Way on Saturdays.

Each of the groups is mobilizing to make connections in the larger community. The Somali Bantu identified that they wanted to form relationships with Somali markets as an outlet for selling their produce. They identified 14 Somali shops but they are not yet gaining a consistent income from developing these relationships. Next season is another opportunity to establish agreements to have a regular outlet for selling produce in neighborhoods where Somali families live. Several Somali Bantu farmers have also expressed an interest to get a customer base and grow the products wanted by customers so

The Burundians have been more receptive to working with volunteers including Highline Community College students which provided them with a connection to the greater community. The Somali Bantu did not embrace the offer of help from the well-intentioned but inexperienced volunteer students in part due to the Somali Bantu farmers expecting that members of their own group would be available to help weed, harvest and wash vegetables in return for a share of the produce. The Burundians have also sold at the Burien, Federal Way, and Des Moines markets so they have established some recognition as the refugee farmers at these markets. The Burundians also sold produce to a church congregation in Sea-Tac for one month. Their presence at the markets has given the Burundians a connection to the greater community among these South King

County markets while the Somali Bantu have a developing presence at the Pike Place Market satellite site in Seattle and at the Auburn and Kent farmers markets.

Developing collaborative relationships- The relationships that the groups of farmers have had with the farming project partners was discussed earlier. In addition, this year the refugee have had some collaborative relationships with these interested community groups and individuals who learned about the refugee farmers through one of several means. The community interest has increased from the local newspaper coverage of the theft of the farmers equipment on July 1 or through contact with Burst for Prosperity or through one of the project's community partners:

- Highline Community College- marketing students helped in setting up space for the farmers to sell on campus on Thursday afternoons, assisted in making signs, arrived at the farm to help and weeded with some instruction with the Burundian farmers. The marketing instructor is interested in having students continue to help the farmers in marketing and selling produce locally. H
- Community Alliance for Global Justice (CAGJ)- CAGJ volunteers came to the farm for a day and interacted with the Burundian farm manager, helped clear tomato plants and imparted some assessment, advice, and encouragement about the farm. C
- Port Townsend Garden Club farmers and Port Townsend Honda and Marine donated a pump and other equipment to replace the equipment that was stolen from the shed.
- AgriWatch has also sent young volunteers to work alongside the farmers weeding or doing other tasks on the farm
- An Auburn farmer adjacent to the Refugee Farming Project farm contacted the King County Agriculture Program Manager offering to let the farmers pick his raspberry crop, sell at local markets, and keep the profit.

The farmers developed a collaborative relationship with the greater community through completing the paperwork to accept WIC vouchers. The Burundians were more timely in following through to submit the required forms while the Somali Bantu needed some prompting from the marketing assistant to get the required number. Becoming eligible to accept WIC vouchers is an indicator of the refugee farmers being mainstream and broadening their customer base.

The Burundians have initiated a collaborative relationship with members of Burundian communities in other states. The Burundian farm manager has met with other Burundians living in Spokane and in Portland through contacts from a local refugee conference and other connections. The Burundian farm manager also packaged and sent dried beans with bean greens to Burundians in the southeast United States. The potential for additional connections

exists as there are communities of Burundians in Chicago, IL; Colorado Springs, CO; Columbia, MO; Fredericksburg, VA; Providence RI; Knoxville and Nashville, TN; and Houston, TX as well as other locations.

Women's Sewing Project is developing- One other area where there has been a new collaborative relationship is with the Women's Sewing Project where the Burundian women initially received instruction with a volunteer teacher and now have progressed to more advanced instruction. The women presented a proposal to participate in sewing classes to become competent in sewing items they could sell to gain income. Burst for Prosperity is sponsoring the women to receive sewing instruction from a professional designer and business owner along with attending class sessions to develop a business. The collaborative relationships extend to the designer who will teach the classes, an additional business instructor, Highline Community College that will provide space for the classes, and the Children's Home Society of Washington that will offer the child care/early childhood education for the women's young children. The benefits for the Burundian women are that they are introduced to adult education in a group setting and they develop skills that should help move them toward financial interdependence and sufficient income.

Component 4 . Results- Beyond the specialized results such as growing and marketing products that are evidence of how the group skills blended with the interactions and guidance received from the project consultants are the less tangible results that occur such as increasing group knowledge and developing new group norms.

The Burundians and the Somali Bantu have developed their communication skills and their interactions within their own communities because they have had to identify a plan for who was to plant, weed or harvest crops on the farm, who was to sell at the farm stand or at the market. The farmers increased their understanding of the greater community markets in learning that they had to apply to sell at a market, interact with a farmers market manager to set up, and pay a percent of the sales. The refugee farmers learned more about customers' preferences by talking with them at the farm stand and the markets. The Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers were very enthusiastic in talking about how they got to know their customers and could recognize some repeat customers. The Burundian farmers who sold at the markets referred to making new friends and having customers ask them about their refugee resettlement story. One Burundian farmer explained that he learned that customers want to hear their story so he became more comfortable in telling new customers where he came from and what he liked about farming and living here in King County. The Somali Bantu farmer who often sold produce at the farm stand talked about customers coming and asking for beets and lettuce and also asking about how the refugees farm the land. These situations have increased the farmers' awareness of the greater community and of the social norms surrounding local farmers markets. The farmers' growing awareness of the expectations for selling at markets helps to prepare them for ongoing interactions with local residents and for entering the labor market.

In addition to these rather specific results, there still remain some slight tensions in the differing expectations of the consultants on the farm team and the refugee farmers. Two of the consultants feel more land and more focus should be on identifying the crops that are preferred by customers with the anticipation of selling more at the markets and the farm stand. This focus aligns with their professional expectation that the farmers will earn income toward experiencing shared relative prosperity. Among both groups of farmers, some prefer to grow crops that are familiar from farming in Africa that they raise to eat and not sell as well as to also harvest the crops in a traditional way which includes small green tomatoes, dried beans and dried bean greens. So the groups of refugee farmers will need to consider if they want to dedicate their farm acreage to growing crops for sale to the American customers or if they want to raise crops for African customers or to raise crops for their own families. Members of each group separately identified that they also need to learn about the timing for planting crops in order to be able to harvest more produce for a longer period during the summer season. The management and use of the available acreage as well as the conditions for sharing the use of the space and the equipment are all issues that concern members of both refugee groups as they look ahead to next year. The Somali Bantu and the Burundian farmers expressed their uncertainty of the level and type of support that they can expect to receive next year to help them plant, harvest and market produce.

Summary of the process evaluation

1. Community factors, project approaches, or refugee group characteristics that were most influential in the implementation of the Economic Independence Initiative this year

- **Community factors that facilitated the project:** visibility of the farm and farm stand, presence at more farmers markets, participation from volunteers, support received after equipment theft, responsiveness of customers at local markets.
- **Project approaches that facilitated the project:** consultation and training on financial record keeping to track sales; marketing classes with hands-on help at the farm to set up the farm stand, clean and sell produce; farm manager who transported farmers to and from the farm and to markets; financial support received for leasing the land and purchasing equipment; community organizer who elicited input from the farmers and the women to develop their interests and skills; each group held regular meetings at the farm to discuss a work schedule or other topics.
- **Refugee group characteristics that facilitated the project:** strong commitment to farming as a means for some members of the community to gain income, willingness to work on the farm blending some traditional skills and knowledge in the Northwest conditions, openness to learn communication skills for marketing.

2. Factors, program strategies, or group characteristics that tended to slow or hinder implementation including lessons learned on what might be done differently.

- Several factors contributed to a slow start to planting. The seeds were ordered but were slow in arriving; the seeds started in the greenhouse did not take; and the rain washed out some of the seeds.
- The lessons learned are to start earlier in planning, preparing the soil and in planting. Increase van transportation to help farmers get to and from the farm, and to and from the markets; offer more demonstrations for setting up and selling at markets and recruit volunteers to help support the farmers to sell and interact with customers at the markets; provide class and experiential learning sessions to increase participants' farming knowledge and skills appropriate to the farmers' limited literacy and English language skills.

3. Conditions or components that emerge as essential for the future implementation of the Refugee Farming Project

- Recruit a knowledgeable and experienced farm manager who will be available to both groups of farmers several hours a day to advise on crop selection, soil conditions, planting schedules, irrigation, harvesting, and crop rotation.

Section 3. Emerging results and outcomes of the Economic Independence Initiative

This section has the outcomes that are emerging in the Economic Independence Initiative including the changes in the knowledge and behavior among the farmers in the Refugee Farming Project and to a lesser extent the women in the Women’s Sewing Project.

The economic independence initiative as demonstrated by the Refugee farming Project is closely aligned with economic self-sufficiency that is a primary goal for refugee resettlement (Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) 2007). Economic self-sufficiency in ORR’s program is defined in federal regulations as “earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant (CFR 45 400.2).” The Office of Refugee Resettlement also launched the Refugee Rural Initiative in 2004 that evolved into the Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program (RAPP) to examine ways to expand opportunities for refugees to become self-sufficient through starting or expanding farm businesses.¹⁰

The components of the Economic Independence Initiative Refugee Farming Project at the *individual* level are listed below with the outcomes that were met in this area.

| Business awareness | Education on local norms | Market exposure |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>Awareness of business skills useful for present and future employment.</i></p> <p>The Burundian farm manager and the Somali Bantu lead followed through in completing WIC paperwork so understanding an application process is an applicable skill.</p> <p>A representative in each group learned record keeping and tracking amount of sales which is a transferable business skill.</p> | <p><i>Education on local cultural norms and expectations.</i></p> <p>Refugee farmers learned to set up market booths, talk to customers but still need to work at labeling produce and pricing. Both groups of farmers learned that “repeat customers” request the same produce all season.</p> <p>The Somali Bantu have faced limitations to learning due to not being literate in English.</p> | <p><i>Exposure to local market economy and practices.</i></p> <p>Both groups of refugee farmers learned they can be flexible and reduce farm stand prices since customers come to them. They learned to price their produce competitively with others at farmers markets. Both groups developed a plan to have produce sellers who had some English skills and increased their competency to respond to customers questions.</p> |

¹⁰ The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s definition of a “farm” is “any operation that sells at least one thousand dollars of agricultural product. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/farmincome/Sizedefinition.htm>.

Components and outcomes of the Refugee Farming Project at the individual level (continued)

| Leadership opportunities | Communication skills | Supported interactions |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Interactions where an individual can self-identify interest and willingness to lead local community.</i> | <i>Opportunities for individuals to develop communication skills and acquire English skills useful in becoming self-sufficient.</i> | <i>Supported interactions with host society through marketing.</i> |
| Men and women have worked together on the farm and now Burundian women are developing a sewing group to learn marketable skills. | At least six Burundians and four Somali Bantu developed English specific for customers and marketing. | The marketing assistant introduced Burundian farmers to new markets resulting in the Burundians regularly at Highline, Burien, Des Moines and Federal Way with the Somali Bantu occasionally at the Pike Place City Hall satellite, Kent and Auburn markets. |

The farmers have increased social skills in talking with customers, gained knowledge about living in South King County, and developed confidence in talking with agency representatives who are outside their community. They have gained confidence to state their requests for more funding, increased self-confidence evident in talking with customers, and have enhanced feelings of belonging to a group.

Lessons learned: Consultants working with the farmers need to be patient, allow time for the farmers to thoughtfully consider options, recognize that some of the farmers have limited transportation or rely on buses, so consultants need to gain the farmers trust before expecting the farmers to engage in farming tasks.

The essential components of the Economic Independence Initiative at the group level are stated below along with the project outcomes specific to each area.

| Supportive environment | Experiential learning | Mutual goal setting |
|--|--|---|
| <i>An environment that supports community development with a community organizer to initiate new interactions and maintain relationships.</i> | <i>Experiential learning to see local farms and markets, observe planting, irrigating, and selling in markets.</i> | <i>Cooperative process for goal setting among the refugees that is respected by community partners and agencies.</i> |
| Members of both community are expressing their own concerns at meetings. Women are collectively stating their requests for sewing and business classes | Farmers have learned best when the content was immediately relevant to what they were doing. Hands on learning was more effective than class sessions. Farmers want advice | The farm team consultants and the farmers have slight differences in how much land is required and what crops should be planted that still reflects the different expectations that the |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| and they are ready to earn income. | on what and when to plant specific to these NW soil conditions. | focus is on selling produce or raising produce to set. |
| <p>Skill specialization</p> <p><i>Specialization in skill development is offered so some refugees market and acquire skills that will transfer to other fields.</i></p> <p>Women are gaining confidence in selling at markets but older women are also experienced farmers.</p> | <p>Leadership development</p> <p><i>Leadership development-practice to identify objectives by consensus or group agreement, form an action plan, and champion an opinion.</i></p> <p>Burundians more readily worked as a group while the Somali Bantu had individual differences that splintered the group but these are resolved currently.</p> | <p>Information sharing</p> <p><i>Structure that allows for sharing information within their communities and allowing time for consideration and discussion.</i></p> <p>The Burundians rely on several younger members as culture brokers to transmit information. The Somali Bantu are limited on what they retain from hearing presentations or meetings .</p> |

The refugee farmers have increased skill in growing and selling produce, and some group members have learned about the soil, the water, and rainfall here in the northwest. The members have gained sufficient knowledge to recognize that they need to know about a business plan, forming a budget, organizing, and marketing so groups of farmers are asking for expert advice. The Somali Bantu draw on their experiences of farming for many years while in Somalia so as a group they are more self-directed to move ahead and they want to plant more crops and harvest more crops without seeking any advice or consultation. The Burundians tend to convene as a group and discuss an option to plant and then they seek some confirmation through Burst for Prosperity before they proceed. The Somali Bantu and the Burundians have not worked collectively in sharing information or setting goals but have instead carried out parallel efforts when they seeded, weeded, harvested, cleaned and sold their produce.

Lessons learned: Farm team consultants working with farmers would do well to work with the Burst for Prosperity Community Organizer to build trust and gain acceptance with each of the groups and should provide learning opportunities geared to the refugees’ interests and immediate needs. The refugee groups approach the farm tasks with a different level of readiness so the Somali Bantu act autonomously while the Burundians rely on the guidance and advice they receive.

The essential components of the Economic Independence Initiative with the related outcomes that occurred at the project level are below:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Financial support <i>Procuring space to farm, contracting for land lease, paying for necessary equipment.</i></p> <p>Both groups have relied on BFP for procuring land and purchasing equipment and are now expressing some uncertainty about next year.</p> | <p>Business development <i>Technical assistance with instruction, so refugees learn skills for a small business.</i></p> <p>Women in the sewing group will be learning business skills, if they are similar to the farmers they will need repeat instruction at the time they are closer to actually starting a business.</p> | <p>Technical assistance <i>Technical assistance- in soils and local crops</i></p> <p>Groups have not consistently interacted positively with the small farms agent but group members identify their interest in gaining expert knowledge on soils and irrigation.</p> |
| <p>Marketing assistance <i>Instruction to understand local marketing practices.</i></p> <p>Both groups engaged in the marketing training and they seek more hands on instruction now that they have gone to markets. Somalis are seeking to develop relationships with Somali stores and Burundians could develop a customer base with Burundians in other states.</p> | <p>Cultural orientation <i>Some refugees need more cultural orientation than others.</i></p> <p>Many Somali Bantu and Burundians were unfamiliar with modern urban life, and so they had great difficulty adjusting to apartment living. They continue to encounter new situations so they need some cultural interpretation to understand local norms and expectations.</p> | <p>Refugee leadership</p> <p>Respected members of the group are emerging in specific areas such as marketing, record keeping, providing transportation, acting as a culture broker between the refugee group and the host society.</p> |

The refugee groups have gained a collective voice, taken action to improve their group living situation, and increased community awareness about their refugee group. The groups generally feel that the farming has been very successful in helping the Burundians and the Somali Bantu to work together and to generate some income that could be shared. Members of both groups seem most satisfied in comparing how well they have done this year in comparison to last year and they cite their increase in planting, harvesting, and marketing knowledge. They refer to their success in having expanded by planting different crops this year, selling in new markets, and having developed working partnerships with members of the community through marketing at new locations. A typical day at a farmers market might generate \$180-\$300 and if the farmers brought a large supply of produce that met the customers' requests then they could potentially earn as much as \$500 in one day. The members of the group are not yet generating an income that it is sufficient to meet their needs but the farming income contributes to their family expenses. Members of the Somali Bantu group seem more intense in talking about finding new markets by developing relationships with Somali stores to buy produce and to growing produce to meet preferred customers' requests.

Section 4. Keys to Leadership Development in the Economic Independence Initiative Refugee Farming Project and Women's Sewing Project

Burst for Prosperity (BFP) has identified that developing leadership qualities among members of the refugee communities is an intended outcome along with enhancing the refugees' farming skills and knowledge. The BFP perspective is that individuals can acquire leadership skills such as decision making, having a vision, setting goals, and taking actions to reach goals. Leadership is not restricted to a single person but can be found among clusters or small groups of individuals who can lead in some circumstances or under some conditions. Refugees in the two communities who emerge as leaders will very likely be active in several related functions or they take on roles that assist the entire community. The emerging leaders have already demonstrated these actions or are currently involved in these actions that they intuitively perform or they have been encouraged to conduct:

- Identify opportunities for individual refugees or for the group
- Engage members of their respective community in discussion and action
- Promote cooperation among members of the community
- Disseminate information from the host society to the community as well as from the community to Burst for Prosperity, agencies, partners, individuals, and organizations of the host society
- Act as a culture broker explaining some of the actions or interactions from the host society to the refugees as well as culturally interpreting actions and interactions among the refugees to Burst for Prosperity and its partners and other agencies
- Initiate new actions such as attending meetings or classes
- Facilitate decision making among members of the refugee community that involves a process of hearing information, considering information and options, arriving at a decision or a path of action to follow.
- Follow-through with the plan of action that is agreed upon by the group and engage others to follow
- Assist in evaluating any decisions that are made for the good of the community
- Identify the abilities that each individual has and promote each person to work at his or her potential

Through the actions of leaders in the refugee communities the refugees will participate in efforts that immediately help them to meet their needs for food and income along with the personal satisfaction that comes from having purposeful activity. Over time through the efforts

of leaders and the engagement of the group, the refugees will develop their financial stability and move toward shared prosperity. Ultimately, refugees will be comfortable in roles as participants in the host society and they will be empowered in arriving at their own solutions for economic interdependence while maintaining their traditional culture and belief system.

To develop leadership among the refugees, Burst has recognized the importance of working with a Community Organizer who has insight and compassion into understanding the refugees' past experiences and the relevance of those events on their current situations. The following guides were developed by the Community Organizer based on interactions and relationships with members of the two refugee communities over two years.

There are several qualities that have emerged in the development of leadership among individuals in both refugee groups. These are emerging tendencies and are not intended to be true for all members of each group or to be generalized to other groups of refugees.

- Leadership tends to develop over the passage of time
- Leadership develops in response to situations when group input is sought
- Leadership draws on the unique characteristics or talents of the individuals

Keys to developing leadership qualities among members of the two refugee communities

Acknowledge social isolation

Somali Bantu and Burundian refugees had experienced social isolation and continue to some extent to be isolated from the larger host society.

- The current patterns of social isolation and their past experiences have influenced members of the Somali Bantu and the Burundian communities to be thoughtful and deliberate in their decision making.

Share information to both communities

Any new information about opportunities or choices related to farming should be presented to both communities, when relevant.

- Members of each community may think they are missing out or perceive that the other community is receiving information if they feel they are not included in a meeting or a designative time to hear information.

Be consistent in communication for trust to develop

Before members of the Burundian or the Somali Bantu community responded they had to feel that they could trust the individual and the agency.

- Trust incorporates providing the same message over time and reiterating the message when needed as well as delivering any service that is promised. Trust also refers to being consistent in following through on any messages, information, or services to all the members of the community. The Community Organizer was patient in allowing time for trust to develop and not expecting decisions from members of the Burundian or Somali Bantu groups until trust was established.

Allow time to pass for information to be received and processed. Plan time for the refugees to meet to debrief new information that they have received.

Members of both communities have shown that they should be allowed time to consider new information or opportunities especially if they are expected to make a decision.

- When we refer to time, this may mean a month or more. When the concept of farming was first introduced to the Burundians, they met amongst themselves for three months before they contacted the Community Organizer to indicate they were interested in learning more about farming.

Respect the deference shown to elders and those in authority

Information should also be repeated with consideration to whether the information is being presented by a younger person to an older person and if the information is being given by a woman to men.

Members of the Burundian community and the Somali Bantu community are accustomed to processing information from a person considered to be an authority figure. When something new is delivered to several members of the community they may hear whatever is said but they will be more likely to consider it when the information is reiterated or delivered again.

Identify that members of refugee communities may information shop so reiterate information and reinforce important messages.

The Burundians typically receive information from more than one person and may even ask the people they interact with for the same information. Several Burundians will collectively assess the information they have and make a decision. The Somali Bantu and the Burundians may do well to hear the same message from more than one person as this reinforces its importance.

- This is an approach that served them well for the many years of being in refugee camps when residents did not always hear the same information at the same time so they learned to combine whatever they know.

Leaders tend to distinguish the process from the content of their actions and decisions. Explain the “why” of any process, procedure or policy that requires input from members of the refugee groups. Discuss “how” an event or a meeting or a group activity will occur prior to any event.

A separate discussion with the leaders on why something is to be done should occur before any discussion about what will happen. The leaders have been best prepared to act when they have been able to understand the underlying reasons for doing something apart from whatever are the related actions, such as why should there be a tour of the markets or stores before discussing logistics of arranging tours for hands on learning at farmers markets, stores or restaurants.

Leaders in the respective communities are perceptive and can anticipate that there will be new opportunities in the future so they can guide other members of the communities to be open to new options.

Some members of the Burundian and Somali Bantu communities are more focused on their present needs and what they need to know immediately but when they meet collectively they can discuss and consider their future actions.

Leaders in the refugee communities can identify that members may have specialized talents or abilities, such as being able to do record keeping, that could be promoted and fostered so the individual develops a marketable skill and the community benefits.

Increase awareness of the collective sense of community among the Burundians and an individual orientation among the Somali Bantu

Burundian decision making is usually a collective process. The younger Burundians may understand more English but they will not reply immediately when asked questions pertaining to the group.

- The younger Burundians tend to initially agree but they are indicating they have heard what you said and will consider it further.

The Burundians respect the wisdom and experience of the elders.

- The younger Burundians will include their elders in decision making or in consideration of new activities such as extending selling to a new market or deciding on the schedule to alternate days for selling at the farm stand.

Let the group guide us and do not assume to know what members of these refugee groups want or prefer.

The individuals who are emerging as group leaders relay information, decisions, and preferences for their groups to the agencies and partners while also transmitting the requests, opportunities, and options available from the agencies to members of the refugee communities. Allow the groups to express their ideas and their decisions and take the lead toward their futures.

Ask the leaders if what you are proposing or what you recommend is acceptable in their culture. Ask if what you propose would be allowed in their cultures.

The leaders appear very willing to state what is considered culturally acceptable or what is in keeping with the values and beliefs of the refugee group. The leaders also check back with members of the community to identify if something is culturally appropriate so this requires time for them to get community input.

The leaders in the refugee communities have been observing how agreements have been made and how negotiations have occurred.

When members of the refugee communities prepared documents they presented the agreement as their best and preferred option. Since they rarely write documents they considered the document that they drafted to be final. So this suggests that when interacting with members of the communities, we should be clear about a document that is a draft that is open for discussion and if a document does not have options for negotiation.

Offer activities to the women that they might do apart from the men. Develop opportunities for the women to make their own decisions.

Last year, the Somali Bantu women asked to sell their handmade items at the market and this year the Burundian women have developed an interest in learning machine sewing. The women have identified that they want to earn incomes to support their families and have developed a plan to receive sewing and business instruction. The Community Organizer had provided a time and a location so that the women could meet separately from the men and supported them in coming together to identify their own interests. They met on their own and developed their proposal that has led to Burst for Prosperity developing a new partnership with Highline Community College to provide the classes and the child care.

Evidence that leadership qualities are developing among members of both communities

The Community Organizer has described evidence that some members of each refugee community are demonstrating their leadership qualities. The members of each community are organizing themselves at meetings and are more readily expressing their needs. They come to

the table ready to state their concerns. Members of both communities attended a meeting and described what they felt were strengths and what were areas to improve for the Refugee Farming Project but they would have struggled to do this one year ago. A group of Burundian women presented a written proposal to take classes to develop their skills that indicates they have learned about expressing goals in writing to document their intent. They would not have done that a year ago but they have participated in farming and interacted with members of their own group and with the encompassing community.

Attachments

Attachment 1

Evaluation Methodology

Implementation evaluation

The evaluation approach emphasized a process or implementation evaluation of the development of the Economic Independence Initiative through the Refugee Farming Project and to a limited extent the Women's Sewing Project. The implementation evaluation used qualitative data collection methods and analysis to assess the extent that the Refugee Farming Project met the intended objectives and engaged the refugees in meeting the objectives along the anticipated timeline.

The qualitative evaluation methods included semi-structured interviews and observations of meetings, farming production, and market activities. The data collection also included document review of project proposals, meeting minutes and other relevant project reports. Data were also collected from meetings including the reflection sessions held separately with the Burundian and Somali Bantu farmers, the lessons learned session held with the farming project community partners, and a farming project team meeting.

The Refugee Farming Project interviews were conducted in March-September 2010 with the Burst for Prosperity staff including the Project Manager, Community Organizer, Farm Manager, and Marketing Assistant. Interviews were also conducted in person or by phone with the community partners including the Washington State University (WSU) County extension agent Refugee Farming expert, the county small farms program manager with the King County Water and Land Resources Division, and the NW Cooperative Development consultant.

The evaluator observed and interacted on nine days with the Burundian refugees and the Somali Bantu refugees selling produce at three farmers markets and at the farm stand. These were individual interviews with the designated leaders of the Burundian and the Somali Bantu communities as well as the Burundian marketing committee, and the Somali Bantu farmers and farming laborers. The evaluator did brief interviews with customers at the farmers markets asking why they decided to buy produce from the refugee farmers. The interviews were semi-structured so the evaluator asked additional questions to expand and clarify the responses given by the farming participants. The Somali Bantu interviews were interpreted. The evaluator also attended a sewing group session, observed the group interaction, and spoke with participants.

Implementation evaluation data analysis

The content of interviews was reviewed and analyzed using theme analysis to extract the common statements and the synchronous perceptions that were expressed by the partners and the participants. In addition the divergent themes and the unique statements were also identified to more fully describe the context of the development and implementation of the Refugee Farming Project. The data analysis included researching background information on the refugee groups and assessing other refugee farming efforts through available online documentation to develop a context for the Refugee Farming Project.

Outcome Evaluation data collection and analysis

The outcome evaluation used qualitative data collection to assess the changes in the participants' knowledge and actions that occurred at the individual level, the group level, and in the interaction of the refugee group and the encompassing local context of South King County and the host society. These changes were increases in farming knowledge that included awareness of planting, harvesting, and marketing approaches appropriate to the local Northwest conditions. In addition to knowledge several outcomes were related to refugee host society interactions: an increase in the refugees' awareness of the values and norms of host society, increase in communication including acquisition of English skills, and enhanced comfort in interactions with members and agencies in the local host community and the host society. Additional outcomes were the developments among the members of each respective refugee community that included the communication among refugees, their working alliances among themselves, and the identification of what means they would use to change their living situations such as increasing their income or acquiring financial assets.

The data collection approaches for the outcome evaluation were individual interviews with the refugees, Burst for Prosperity staff members, and community partners as well as observations made at group interactions that occurred in meetings, farming and marketing activities, and group sharing sessions. The content from the interviews and the group sessions was analyzed for the common themes as well as the unique statements that illustrated the experiences of the refugees from their perspectives and those of the staff and partners. The analysis examined the topics referred to by the refugees and the other informants as well as the relationships among the topics. The different topics were analyzed as to whether the perspectives that were expressed defined a topic, expanded on a topic, or elaborated the topic. The results of the content analysis were described at the individual, group and community level in Section 3.

Attachment 2

Summary of the refugee groups' experiences that influence their responses here as displaced workers

Burundian refugees

There is far less published research regarding the Burundian refugees than for other groups including the Somalis and Somali Bantus. Some evidence in the refugee literature confirms that some Burundians fled during conflicts in the 1970s and were relocated to refugee camps in Tanzania. The long term forced relocation led to the generation of young Burundians who grew up not having set foot in Burundi. There were also mass killings in Burundi in 1993 that followed a coup to reclaim political power that followed a short-lived period of democratization. A 13-year long civil war followed the coup and another 200,000 lives were lost along with further declines in the country's already depleted infrastructure and economy.¹¹ Burundians who had acquired livestock including cows, goats, sheep or pigs or those individuals who were educated were more likely to have been killed in the 1993 attacks which led to a hypothesis that less educated individuals may have fled and been relocated in camps. Studies of relocated refugees identified high incidences of trauma and Post-traumatic stress disorder. Complex interactions would have developed in the camps between the traumatized refugees and the teams of relief workers who tried to maintain order and distribute food and resources. The Burundians had a long term reliance on humanitarian aid. The complicated subordinate relationships which would have contributed to the refugees developing patterns of receiving information, waiting and assessing information, and developing a communal perspective to arrive at decisions of what actions to take.

Somali Bantu refugees

There was a separate and second period that influenced the construction of the sense of community of the Bantu and that occurred in the refugee camps. In the interest of conferring some control and order and to allow for equal distribution among camp residents, those who entered a camp were identified by their region, tribe, and clan. The Somalis from pastoral backgrounds tended to be divided by their patrilineal ties which led to those who did not have those ties to be classified during their camp registration as Bantu. This distinction tended to be maintained even when the Bantu did not speak a Bantu-based language. The beneficial effect was that this categorization led to increased visibility and recognition for the Bantu and separated them from the Somalis. If the Somalis had been grouped with the Somali Bantu the

¹¹ Bundervoet, T. (2009) Livestock, Land and Political Power: The 1993 Killings in Burundi. *The Journal of Peace Research* 46 (3), 357-376.

Bantu might have been poorly treated and risked having their food stolen and they did not have any clan protection.

The Somali Bantu may have come from sparsely populated rural regions and some were then relocated in very large camps of 40,000 residents. In the camps, they would have had limited exposure to government services and transportation systems that they did not have in Somalia. The Somali Bantu who came to King County starting in 2004 were overwhelmed in the differences of living in an urban area. They received minimal transition orientation through their relocation agencies. Most Somali Bantu were illiterate, lacked English skills and lacked job skills. After several years the majority of them had not become actively employed but did become familiar with some resources and a small group formed a non-profit association that has been headed by a director and a volunteer community board. The Somali Bantu Association of Washington has promoted Somali Bantu culture and camaraderie through a soccer team and classes on the traditional arts and crafts. Local Somali Bantu women were in English classes during a weekday at the Somali Bantu Association.

The Somali Bantu indicated another example of their community as they place a high value on their family. They were committed to trying farming because parents and children can be together in the fields and children can even be taught to help with holding or cleaning the produce that has been picked.

Attachment 3
Group Characteristics and assets identified for the Burundian and Somali Bantu Refugee Groups

| | Burundians | Somali Bantu |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Sense of community | Approximately 15 families, 60 people, South King County to Everett, arrived since 2007, have kept in contact with each other and agreed to meet quarterly, developed a set of social rules | 500 families have lived in the area (Everett-Tacoma) since 2005, formed a non-profit association that is headed by directors and a volunteer board. Have expectations as to mutual aid for members based on pooled resources. |
| Previous experiences | Had very extended duration in refugee camps, as long as 30 years. While in the camps did subsistence farming. Younger generation grew up entirely in refugee camps. Developed blocks and councils to make communal decisions. Had limited interactions and traumatic conditions. | Some refugees had lived longer in Somalia prior to relocation to refugee camps. Before camp experience some had been subsistence farmers and while in camps had grown produce on available plots of land. Centuries of farming experience and long standing agricultural traditions. |
| Level of commitment | Had not initially identified farming on their own as a potential source of income but after exposure to the concept, they embraced it. They have a community president, treasurer, farm manager, and marketing committee, 15 people have worked on the farm, 4 full time and 11 part time. | Had decided as a group to start farming, explored the market by asking Somali stores what to sell, approached their contact to help get a plot of land, cleared land and raised several crops. Ten people worked on the farm that includes eight helpers working under the direction of two experienced farmers. |
| Ability to solve problems | An informal team of younger adults helped in drafting community rules. President engages community members to reach consensus in decision making. Community meets as a group and elders input is | Directors of the Somali Bantu Association lead a discussion with key members including a board to make decisions. Had procured a donated truck for transporting produce to market. The Somali Bantu Farming LLC is distancing itself from the Somali Bantu |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| | considered. | Association of Washington. |
| Access to resources | Have human resources, one experienced farmer, many willing workers, Have had very limited financial resources while individuals are working part-time or full-time at low paying hourly jobs. Women attending ESL classes and are interested in sewing, tailoring. | Have willing farm workers. Have very limited income and have pooled resources – all contribute but if agreed someone can also share in the pooled amount to make a purchase that benefits the greater community. Received small grants, seeking more grant funding and help from Burst. |