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Refugee Services in Kentucky: A Case-Study of CEDARS in Bowling Green, KY

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REFUGEE SERVICES IN KENTUCKY:
A CASE-STUDY OF CEDARS IN BOWLING GREEN, KY

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

Mia J. Jackson

* * * * *

Western Kentucky University
2013

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2013

ABSTRACT

This thesis documents existing refugee organizations and services in Kentucky with an in-depth focus on the Center for Development, Acculturation, & Resolution Services (CEDARS) in Bowling Green, KY. CEDARS was established in 2011 with the mission of connecting various community resources in order to assist refugees and immigrants in their resettlement transition following the initial 90 days when government assistance ends. This case-study of CEDARS examines the non-profit's history, organization, missions, accomplishments, and areas of needed improvement. The research looks at how CEDARS fits into the context of Kentucky's existing non-profit refugee service organizations and, more specifically, within the small city of Bowling Green. An analysis of this organization and others in the area will illustrate the current state of refugee services in Kentucky, as well as needed improvements for the future.

Keywords: refugees, resettlement, Bowling Green, Kentucky, acculturation, assimilation, community partnerships, international community

--Dedicated to the volunteers who selflessly
devote their time, money, and energies to the
various refugee-aid agencies--

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ACRONYMS

CEDARS	Center for Development, Acculturation & Resolution Services
UN	United Nations
USRAP	United States Refugee Admissions Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
RSC	Resettlement Support Center
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (U.S. Department of State)
FY	Fiscal Year
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
ORR	Office of Refugee Resettlement
BRYCS	Bridging Refugee Youth Children's Services
SIPA	Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs
USCCB	United States Catholic Conference of Bishops
CCLou	Catholic Charities of Louisville
KOR	Kentucky Office for Refugees
WKU	Western Kentucky University
CASOKY	Community Action of Southern Kentucky
RAPP	Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program
MRS	Migration and Refugee Services
JFCS	Jewish Family & Career Services

WKRMAA	Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance Association; the International Center
KRM	Kentucky Refugee Ministries
ALIVE	ALIVE [A Local Information and Volunteer Exchange] Center for Community Partnerships
FA	Food for All Community Garder
HOTEL INC	Helping Others Through Extended Love In the Name of Christ
TAG	Targeted Assistance Grant
MG	Matching Grant
HSRB	Human Subjects Review Board
CITI	Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
ICSR	Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility
MSL	Multicultural Service-Learning
THDS	The \$100 Solution™
CWS/IRP	Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States is often referred to as a “melting pot,” a nation consisting of many different races, ethnicities, religions, and culture. This image of diversity is one in which most Americans take a great deal of pride. We celebrate the amalgamation of native peoples, descendants of settlers, and recent immigrants. When most of us think of newcomers to this melting pot, we envision those who worked hard to come to our nation in order to realize the “American Dream.” So what do we make of those newcomers who didn’t necessarily choose to be here, who are sometimes reluctant to assimilate to our American way of life, to learn our language and our customs? For many refugees, this is the case, and for many Americans who view their country as one of willing immigrants, this notion is confusing and impacts the organization of agencies and the services we provide.

In accordance with the United Nations’ definition, the United States recognizes a *refugee* as one who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (UN General Assembly, 1951). It is essential to note that the primary distinction between immigrants and refugees is that

immigrants have made the conscious decision to relocate and apply for citizenship in the country of their choice; refugees, on the other hand, are people who out of necessity have fled their native countries to seek asylum and are then placed, by government organizations, in a country of refuge. Essentially, in the case of refugees there is virtually no choice about which country they are to resettle in. As more and more of these individuals are brought to places like Bowling Green--a small, conservative, southern Kentucky city, right on the edge of the Bible Belt--how do such communities make sense of these newly arrived populations and the challenges they face to become acculturated?

Ultimately, the aim of this thesis is to discuss the growing refugee presence in cities like Bowling Green, Kentucky, and to determine how CEDARS, a refugee service organization in its infancy, has evolved in order to provide services to refugee communities. This analysis is divided into seven sections: the following chapter provides a brief history of refugee resettlement in the United States and an introduction to the resettlement process, chapter three reviews a selection of literature on refugee service organizations, chapters four discusses the significance of this topic to Kentucky as a whole and offers an overview of the most prevalent refugee service organizations in Kentucky to date, chapter five is comprised of a case-study of a refugee service organization called CEDARS in Bowling Green, and chapter six offers conclusions and an analysis of the future of refugee services in Kentucky.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF REFUGEES IN THE U.S. AND THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

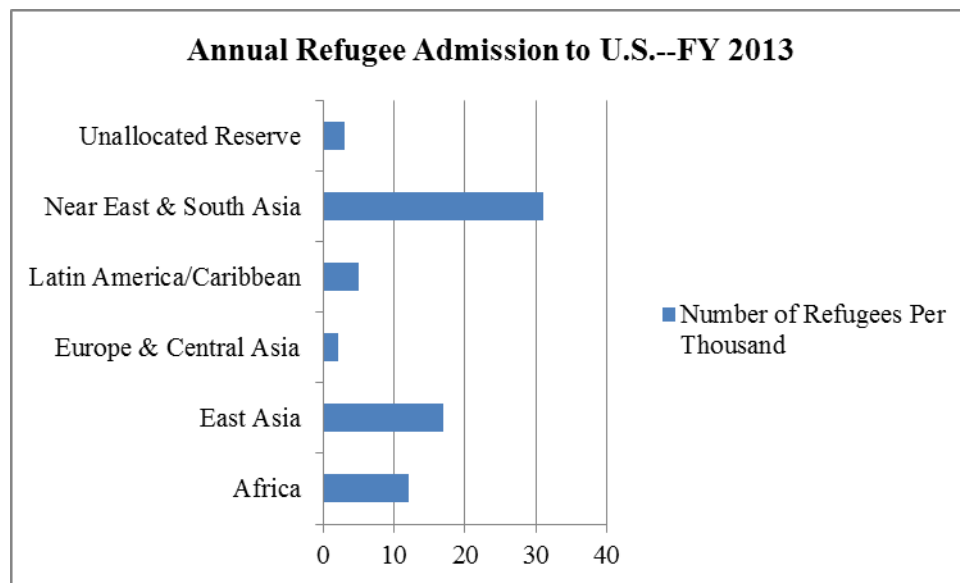
Since the 1940's the United States has maintained a policy of providing asylum to political and cultural refugees. Following World War II and the entrance of more than 250,000 displaced Europeans, Congress enacted the Displaced Persons Act of 1948--the first refugee legislation. During the Cold War in the 1950s and 60s, more laws were enacted to allow for the acceptance of people seeking refuge from Communist regimes. Later, following the surge of Indochinese refugees, Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980. This act formalized the relationship between refugees and the United States by adopting the definition of *refugee*¹ put forth by the United Nations and by making resettlement a standardized process (Refugee Council USA, "History", n.d.).

The Refugee Act of 1980 became the basis upon which the current Refugee Admissions Program was built. Since its inception, over 3 million refugees have been admitted into the United States (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The Admissions Program is regulated by several offices, including the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the Department of Homeland Security, and nine nongovernmental organizations (Refugee Council USA, "Refugee Admissions", n.d.). At the beginning of every fiscal year, the President consults with

¹ As noted in Chapter 1, this definition of *refugee* is anyone "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UN General Assembly, 1951).

Congress to determine the admission level of refugees and the number of refugees to be accepted from each region. For example, *figure 1* illustrates the breakdown of the 70,000 admissions allowed by region for the 2013 fiscal year as determined by President Barack Obama (U.S. Government Office of the Press, 2012). As shown in *figure 1*, the largest allowances for admissions are reserved for refugees from Near East/South Asia, East Asia, and Africa, a decision which is based on a ranking of the most pressing refugee situations. This determination has been fairly consistent in recent years and is reflected in Bowling Green, Kentucky's four largest refugee populations: people from Iraq, Burma (also known as Myanmar), Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi.

Figure 1: 2013 U.S. Refugee Admissions by Region

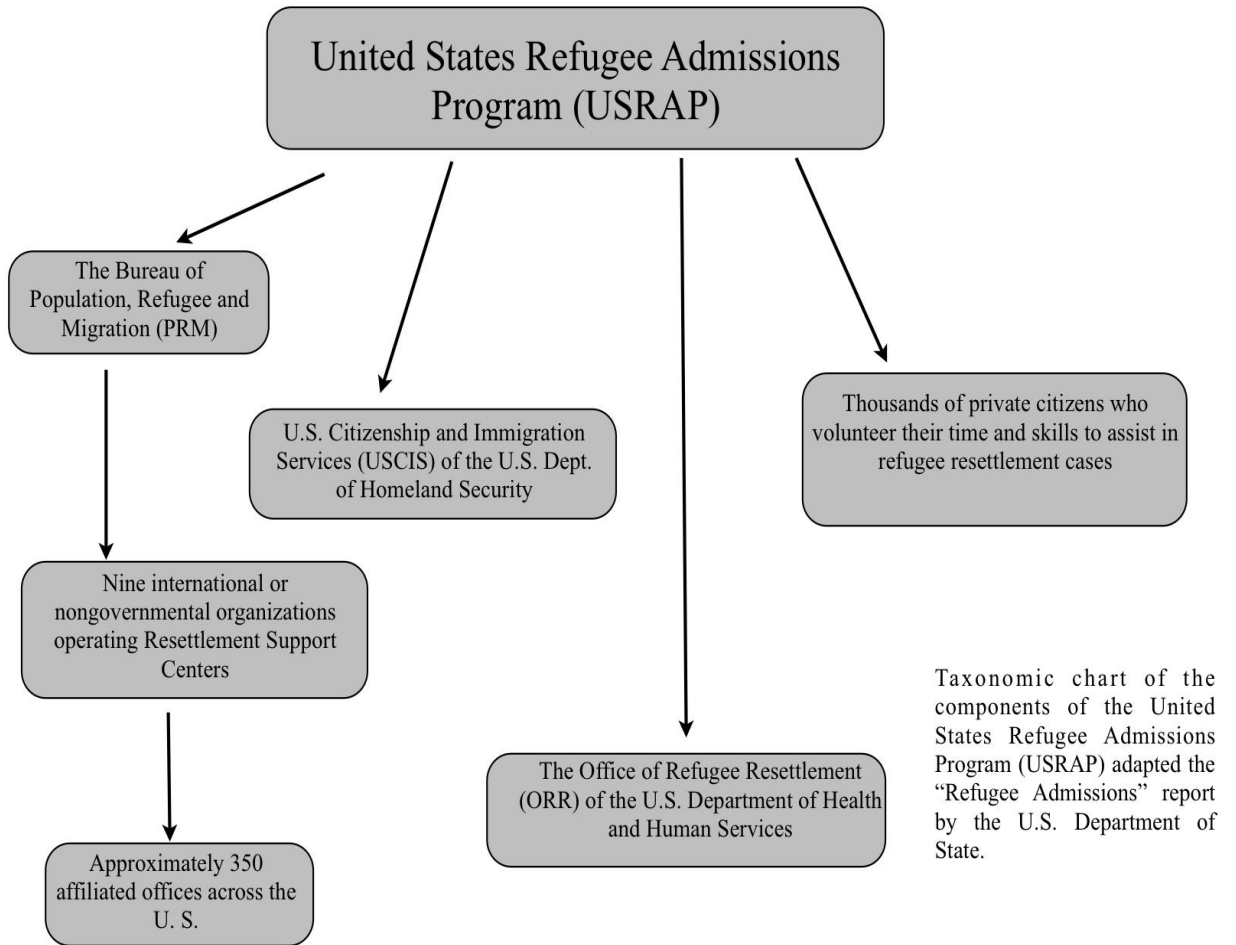


Following the President's determination of maximum allowance of refugees, the admission process begins. This process is regulated by the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), which is made up of components illustrated in *figure 2*.

After escaping their native countries, most refugees are required to register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the U.S. Embassy in the country to which the refugees have fled. After a processing period of 8 to 12 months, if the UNHCR refers the application to the United States, the case is then processed by a Resettlement Support Center (RSC), which is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). Once an individual is approved for admission into the U.S., a health screening takes place to prevent contagious diseases from entering the country and to ensure that individuals with chronic illness are resettled in areas that can provide adequate care and resources. Next, the RSC assigned to that case will ask for a "sponsorship assurance" from a resettlement agency in the U.S. The final step before arrival in the U.S. is a short "cultural orientation course" (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

When a refugee has arrived in the U.S., the resettlement agency sponsoring him or her determines where resettlement will take place. The final resettlement location is based on two criteria: whether the refugee has close relatives anywhere in the U.S. or which community has the most appropriate resources to meet the refugee's needs. Resettlement agencies are funded by the Department of State's Reception and Placement Program in order to contribute to the cost of transportation, resettlement, and basic necessities for the individual during his or her first three months in this country. By day 91 after arriving in the U.S., individual refugees are no longer eligible for most government financial assistance. The refugee is expected to apply for permanent residence after one year, and U.S. citizenship after five (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

Figure 2: Components of the United States Refugee Admissions Program



CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there is an immense amount of research available in the field of refugee studies, there is a significantly limited amount of literature on the subject of refugees in Kentucky. The few analyses and reports which have focused specifically on Kentucky, such as those by Thomas Lawson (n.d.) and Elcin Celik (2012), primarily discuss the difficulties faced by refugees in the resettlement and integration processes. Current and recent trends in research have been focused on evaluations of resettlement and integration, but minimal work has been done specifically on organizational practices of agencies that contribute to the success or failure of these processes. Of the studies done on resettlement and integration, analyses by Graham R. Sowa, Susan Banki, and the Church World Service are most applicable to this thesis. On the subject of policy and organizational methods, research from Lyn Morland and colleagues, researchers at Columbia University, and Peggy Halpern will be reviewed. Finally, because of the prevalence of faith-based refugee agencies in Kentucky, literature by Sara L. McKinnon, Burwell and colleagues, Smith and Sosin, Pipes and Ebaugh, and the U.S. Committee on International Relations on the nature and implications of faith-based agencies will be used.

Resettlement and Integration

In “Experiencing Refugee Resettlement in America,” Sowa (2009) notes the negative effects of generalized refugee policies and services, specifically the goal of economic self-sufficiency within the first three months--a goal which Sowa insists is a generalized notion of “successful” resettlement and integration held by most agencies. Sowa uses his experience volunteering with a refugee family to support his claim that “power is exercised through generalization and generalized expectations” (p. 103). Throughout his discourse, Sowa argues that “expectations of these resettled refugees [...] are generalized beyond specificity for the needs of the individuals” (p. 108), ultimately concluding that these expectations result in inefficient service to refugees. In other words, Sowa is criticizing the efficacy of maintaining a generalized goal of economic independence within the first three months for all refugees and contends that more individualized goals are necessary for refugee agencies to provide the most effective services. This issue is present in Bowling Green, KY, and was one of the reasons CEDARS was initially formed. Most agencies are restricted (due to regulations for certain types of federal funding) to only providing services for the initial resettlement period and to only providing services which explicitly meet the federal goals of employment-readiness and economic self-sufficiency. CEDARS was established to combat these limitation by offering services for every stage of resettlement and by meeting individually-determined needs such as mental health, which is often more pressing than sustainable employment.

Additionally, Susan Banki (2004) and the Church World Service (2010) define and analyze degrees of refugee integration--calculations which are necessary to evaluate

the efficacy of any refugee agency with the goal of successful resettlement and integration. Banki (2004) defines *local integration* as “the ability of the refugee to participate with relative freedom in the economic and communal life of the host region [as well as] cultural and political participation, [...] full legal rights, [...] and] full self-sufficiency” (p.2). Banki (2004) also distinguishes local integration as more sustainable than intermediate integration, which is only focused on superficial community participation. Furthermore, a report from the Church World Service (2010) expands upon Banki’s definition by including factors such as “feelings of satisfaction and capacity, [...] achieving a balance between [native] culture and [...] new culture, language and ability to communicate, [...] positive attitudes [and] behaviors, [and] community participation” (p. 6).

Policy and Organizational Methods

Using a case-study of the techniques used by the national “Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services” (BRYCS) program, Morland, Duncan, Hoebing, Kirshke, and Schmidt discuss the role of agencies in assisting refugees to interact with “mainstream systems” such as schools and law enforcement, while emphasizing a cross-service training approach. This training approach is described as forums in which community leaders in various services can come together to share information and resources with the ultimate goal to “enhance interagency communication, resource sharing and coordination; [to] increase the effectiveness of child welfare [...] and intervention services to newcomer refugee families; and [to] improve child welfare outcomes for refugee[s]” (Morland et al., 2005, p. 801). Due to the federal regulations on the types and duration of services provided to refugees, it is essential that agencies in the

same area develop an exchange network of information and support for their clients. For example, a person may be assigned to a specific resettlement agency for his or her first three months in the country, during which period the agency will provide employment, cash, and medical assistance. However, following day 91, agencies dealing with initial resettlement will no longer be able to provide continued assistance for the individual and must refer him or her to another agency which has funding policies that allow for continued integration services. This “interagency” interaction, which Morland et al. determined to be most effective for refugee services, has been a minimal feature in Bowling Green’s network of refugee agency, and improvement has been a conscious goal of organizations like the International Center, Community Action, the ALIVE Center and CEDARS (to be discussed in following chapters).

A refugee resettlement report by the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) team of Columbia University (2010) offers suggestions for federal and local agencies to better deal with the major issues facing refugees in the period of resettlement. The SIPA team based their report on what they found to be the most prevalent challenges nation-wide, such as “conflicting policy goals, lack of adequate funding [...] obstacles to coordination and planning [...] lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation [...] insufficient pre-departure orientation [...] gaps in information [...] and the ‘lottery effect’ created by the lack of a uniform set of services provided to refugees” (p. iii). To overcome these issues, the SIPA team proposed having a review of federal funding levels, a more active role for the refugee in decision making, an individualized approach to services offered, and the revision and expansion of employment services (SIPA, 2010).

Lastly, Halpern's (2008) study explores how the various styles and approaches used in Office of Refugee Resettlement Programs (ORR) help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency. Using data collected from various ORR agencies, Halpern outlines the approaches and characteristics of agencies that have been found to be most effective in resettlement and integration. For example, Halpern notes such features as the use of volunteers at every level; job training and support before, during, and after employment; an individualized and goal-oriented approach; program flexibility; smaller caseload sizes; community support and the establishment of refugee self-help communities; interagency communication; and a holistic family-focused approach (Halpern, 2008).

Faith-Based Agencies

McKinnon's "Bringing New Hope and New Life" describes the prevalence of faith-based resettlement agencies and the approaches they take to addressing volunteer recruitment and refugee challenges in community integration. McKinnon argues that the discourse present in the recruitment campaigns of the six religious-based, government-funded, volunteer resettlement agencies creates a negative view of the relationship between volunteer and refugee. Noting that "the discourse creates a hierarchy of humanity where [volunteers] who are 'seen' must do their part [...] to 'help' refugees resettle," McKinnon contends that this hierarchy "furthers an ideology of assimilation" rather than acculturation² (2009, p. 323).

Additional literature addressing the prevalence and nature of faith-based service organizations can be found in articles by Burwell, Hill, and Wicklin (1986), Smith and

² In this paper, *assimilation* refers to the entire absorption of one culture by another, whereas *acculturation* refers the change in culture from external interactions while still maintaining distinct elements of native culture.

Sosin (2001), Pipes and Ebaugh (2002), and in a hearing of the Committee on International Relations (2006). Burwell, Hill, and Wicklin's (1986) research was based on a study of the impact of religiously affiliated agencies on the resettlement and integration of Southeast Asian refugees. Their study found that in a sample of 74 refugees from non-Christian backgrounds, 100% reported a change in their religious identity after becoming clients of Christian-based resettlement agencies (p. 359).

Smith and Sosin (2001) present research on the effects religious affiliation has on the services provided by agencies. They argue that, although "'faith-based' agencies are attractive to many policy makers, scholars, and lay people because they appear to emphasize thrift, individual responsibility, less government, responsiveness, and flexibility," it should be noted that "agencies have varying ties to religion, and these ties affect the agencies' organization moderately to profoundly" (p. 651-652).

Pipes and Ebaugh (2002) look at how "the charitable choice provision, Section 104 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and President Bush's recent Faith-Based and Community Initiative" have encouraged the prevalence and practices of faith-based service agencies, ultimately concluding that "religiously affiliated and community-based solutions [are targeted] to fill the social service gap," and that "faith-based organizations that receive government funding might well experience changes in their policies and programs" (p. 49, 65, 66).

Finally, a hearing of the U.S. Committee on International Relations (2006) addresses concerns of "some people uneasy about what they believed to be the principle of separation of church and state" following President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative (p. 7). The committee maintains that there has long been "a history

of partnership between government and faith-based organizations, a history that did not include government sponsorship of religion or forced conversions,” and that the contribution faith-based agencies have made to achieving social service goals are incomparable to any negative implications that may be associated with the federal government funding religious associations (p. 7, 37).

CHAPTER 4

REFUGEE SERVICES IN KENTUCKY

Refugee resettlement in the United States is by no means a new phenomenon, and as conflict persists globally, it will likely continue so long as funds and resources are available. For these reasons, refugee studies are of national importance. Despite the expectation that refugee admissions may decrease in the future as we continue in economic recession, the definition of *refugee* used by the U.S. means that the majority of refugees that have come to the country in recent years have come from protracted conflict situations and are therefore unable to return to their native countries. For example, the U.S. Department of State identifies Burmese refugees—one of the largest refugee populations in Bowling Green, KY—as the third most pressing protracted refugee situation in the world (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

Although refugee resettlement has been occurring nationwide for several decades, the state of Kentucky, and specifically the city of Bowling Green, has only become a popular resettlement site in the past 15 years or so. When compared to places like New York or Los Angeles, we are relatively new to refugee resettlement. As an entire community we can benefit by understanding the existing refugee service organizations and analyzing their methods and approaches.

The following sections of this paper will include an overview of several existing refugee resettlement and integration programs in Kentucky based upon both formal and

informal interviews with organizations leaders, as well as observations and research. The intention of this study is to aid in statewide understanding of refugee services; to reflect upon the growth of CEDARS as an organization; to provide an analysis of the status of refugee services in this community; and to offer evaluations and suggestions for the future of refugee services in Kentucky. The purpose of presenting an in-depth examination of CEDARS as an organization is not to suggest that it is entirely unique in its structure and practice, but rather, to explore the organization as a case-study, or example of how Kentucky refugee services in general operate and evolve.

When characterizing Kentucky, many people may note the state's history and culture of agriculture, horse racing, and bourbon production. Our image as a state is one that is conservative, old-fashioned, and homogenous; terms such as *cosmopolitan*, *diverse*, or *international* are not commonly associated with Kentucky, other than as aspirations, but are quickly becoming key words in the future of cities like Louisville and Bowling Green. According to Catholic Charities of Louisville, the state of Kentucky became a resettlement location following the Refugee Act of 1980 when the Office for Refugee Resettlement (ORR) established programs in the state to aid refugees with money, medical assistance, and social services. The first 12 years of these ORR programs were managed by the Kentucky state government. Following failing economic conditions in the early 1990s, the Kentucky state government decided to withdraw from refugee program management in 1992. In order to continue the resettlement of refugees in Kentucky, the ORR designated the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) in Washington, DC, as the lead agency to manage refugee resettlement programs. This shift meant that the local director of USCCB, Catholic Charities of

Louisville's Kentucky Office for Refugees, would then act as the Kentucky state refugee coordinator. Because Kentucky's refugee services are managed by Catholic Charities, a non-profit, they are referred to as Wilson Fish Programs, which emphasize early employment and temporary cash assistance. Similar situations can be found in Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and San Diego, California (Catholic Charities of Louisville [CCLou], "Kentucky Office for Refugees" ["KOR"], n.d.).

The reasoning for refugee resettlement in Kentucky cities such as Louisville and Bowling Green is based upon their growing positions as preferred communities. According to the ORR, "preferred communities allow ample opportunities for early employment and sustained economic independence. In addition, they support special needs populations" (Office of Refugee Resettlement, "Preferred Communities, n.d.). The ORR has been matching refugees with preferred communities since the early 1990s and during this time has shifted emphasis from major metropolises like Los Angeles and New York City to less-crowded cities with lower costs of living and more opportunities for small, community-based integration services. Because of the combining of refugee and legal-immigrant statistics from the U.S. Census, it is difficult to determine the exact number of refugees in Kentucky. Since the establishment of the practice of matching refugees with preferred communities, Kentucky's legal immigrant population, which includes refugees, has tripled to a yearly average of 2.5% of the state's total population, or approximately 111,000 (Bruno, 2001). According to StateMaster, a database that compiles data from the ORR, Kentucky ranks number 14 in the nation in refugee totals with approximately 13 refugees per thousand citizens. In comparison, New York ranks

only just above Kentucky at number 13 with just under 14 refugees per thousand citizens (Office of Refugee Resettlement, “Refugees Total”, n.d.). Specifically, the city of Bowling Green has received just over 2,100 refugees in the past five years from 13 different countries, including Bosnia, Burundi, Iraq, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burma.

In accordance with standards set by the ORR, resettlement agencies in Kentucky are required to make sure five components are made available to refugees: initial relocation assistance, temporary cash assistance, temporary medical assistance, non-employment-related social services, and employment services (Dept. for Community Based Services Training Branch).

Within the state of Kentucky there are currently four major resettlement organizations: Catholic Charities of Louisville, which is comprised of several smaller agencies and programs in Louisville, Lexington, and Bowling Green (illustrated in *figure 3*); Jewish Family and Vocational Services in Louisville; the Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance Association, now referred to as the International Center, in Bowling Green and Owensboro; and the Kentucky Refugee Ministries in Louisville and Lexington (Dept. for Community Based Services Training Branch). In addition to these four resettlement agencies, there are a number of smaller services and organizations available (some of which are branches of Catholic Charities) that primarily provide assistance to refugees who have been in Kentucky for several months or years. These include the Americana Community Center in Louisville, Western Kentucky University’s (WKU) ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships in Bowling Green, Community Action (CASOKY) in Bowling Green, the Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program (RAPP) in

Louisville, the newly created Food for All Community Garden in Bowling Green, and of course the Center for Development, Acculturation & Resolution Services (CEDARS), which will be discussed in-depth in the following chapter.

Although Catholic Charities of Louisville includes small organizations and programs, its main components are the Kentucky Office for Refugees (KOR) and the department of Migration and Refugee Services (MRS). KOR can be seen as the starting point for all refugee services in the state as it serves as the Kentucky State Refugee Coordinator's office as designated by the ORR. KOR's role is to provide "leadership [and] policy guidance and advocacy issues affecting the refugee resettlement network in Kentucky" (CCLou, "KOR"). In addition, KOR annually awards and manages \$6 million of federal funds from the ORR, including "refugee cash and medical assistance, formula, and discretionary funding" (CCLou, "KOR"). Through the ORR, KOR is able to award funding for several programs, specifically the Matching Grant Program (MG) for case management, employment, and cash assistance services; and the Targeted Assistance Program (TAG), which deals with employment and self-sufficiency.

The prevalence of faith-based refugee service agencies in Kentucky is related to the state government's ceding of refugee program management to a volunteer agency (in our case, Catholic Charities of Louisville). Subsequently, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, along with President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative of 2002 (Pipes & Ebaugh, 2002), encouraged other religiously-affiliated organizations to intercede in addressing community social service needs.

Within the umbrella of Catholic Charities of Louisville, KOR works alongside the MRS. While KOR manages the funding, the role of MRS is in the actual resettlement

process of refugees arriving in Kentucky, or as their mission states, “to involve, organize, and bring together the agency, church, and community resources necessary for successful resettlement” (CCLou, “KOR”). MRS assists in resettlement by offering employment support, case management, and English language training services. Overall Catholic Charities of Louisville exists in response to Catholicism’s emphasis on social service and human responsibility.

The Jewish Family & Career Services in Louisville (JFCS) is a non-profit organization that offers a Multicultural Services program that aids immigrants and refugees in achieving economic self-sufficiency. Through funding from the ORR, the US Small Business Administration, Chase Bank, and the Greater Louisville International Professionals, JFCS helps refugees gain financial independence by offering loans for small businesses, career planning workshops, US banking workshops, and assistance in returning to former careers (JFCS Louisville, n.d.). Similar to the Catholic Charities’ religious reasoning for its organization, JFCS operates under the values of the Hebrew concept of *Tikkun olam*, or making the world a better place, which emphasizes “an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses the ever-changing circumstances throughout one’s life” (JFCS Louisville, n.d.).

Founded in 1979 and formerly referred to as Western Kentucky Refugee Mutual Assistance Association (WKRMAA), the International Center was the first non-profit organization in Bowling Green to provide resettlement services to refugees. According to the International Center’s website, the organization’s role is to “address the needs of refugees [...] in their assimilation to community life” by ensuring that “each family gets placed into housing and receives social security cards, [...] medical checkups,

employment, English classes, [...] and grocery shopping” (Intl. Center of Bowling Green, n.d.). Programs and services concerning employment, health, housing, education, and community advocacy are made possible by a combination of base funding from the ORR and donations, goods, and volunteer services from the local community (Intl. Center of Bowling Green, n.d.).

The last of the four main resettlement organizations is Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM), based in Louisville and Lexington. KRM was established in 1989 to offer assistance to refugees as part of the organization’s vision to “compassionately welcome and serve the world’s displaced people...[t]o encourage the hope that lives within each human being...[t]o be known for ... reliability, resourcefulness, partnerships and comprehensive services” (KRM). As a reflection of this mission, KRM offers over 25 programs which, similar to the International Center, emphasize housing, employment, and education services, but also “long-term assistance [including] job upgrades, immigration processes and classes and preparation of individuals to become naturalized American citizens” (KRM). These wide-ranging programs are primarily funded by federal grants and supported by a large staff of over 55 people and a pool of over 25,000 volunteers (KRM).

Following the three-month mark when government financial assistance decreases or stops entirely, refugees are often directed to smaller organizations that focus primarily on integration following resettlement. These programs aim to incorporate refugees into the native cultures of a given city and therefore are smaller and more community-based than resettlement agencies. For example, the Americana Community Center in Louisville offers workshops and programs to “enable people to realize their individual potential, [...]

and create a healthy & supportive community” (Americana Comm. Center, n.d.). Similar goals can be found in the mission of WKU’s ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships, an organization in Bowling Green that created a temporary Multicultural Services department to address the needs of immigrants and refugees by “support[ing] community development through [...] community partnerships” (ALIVE Center, n.d.).

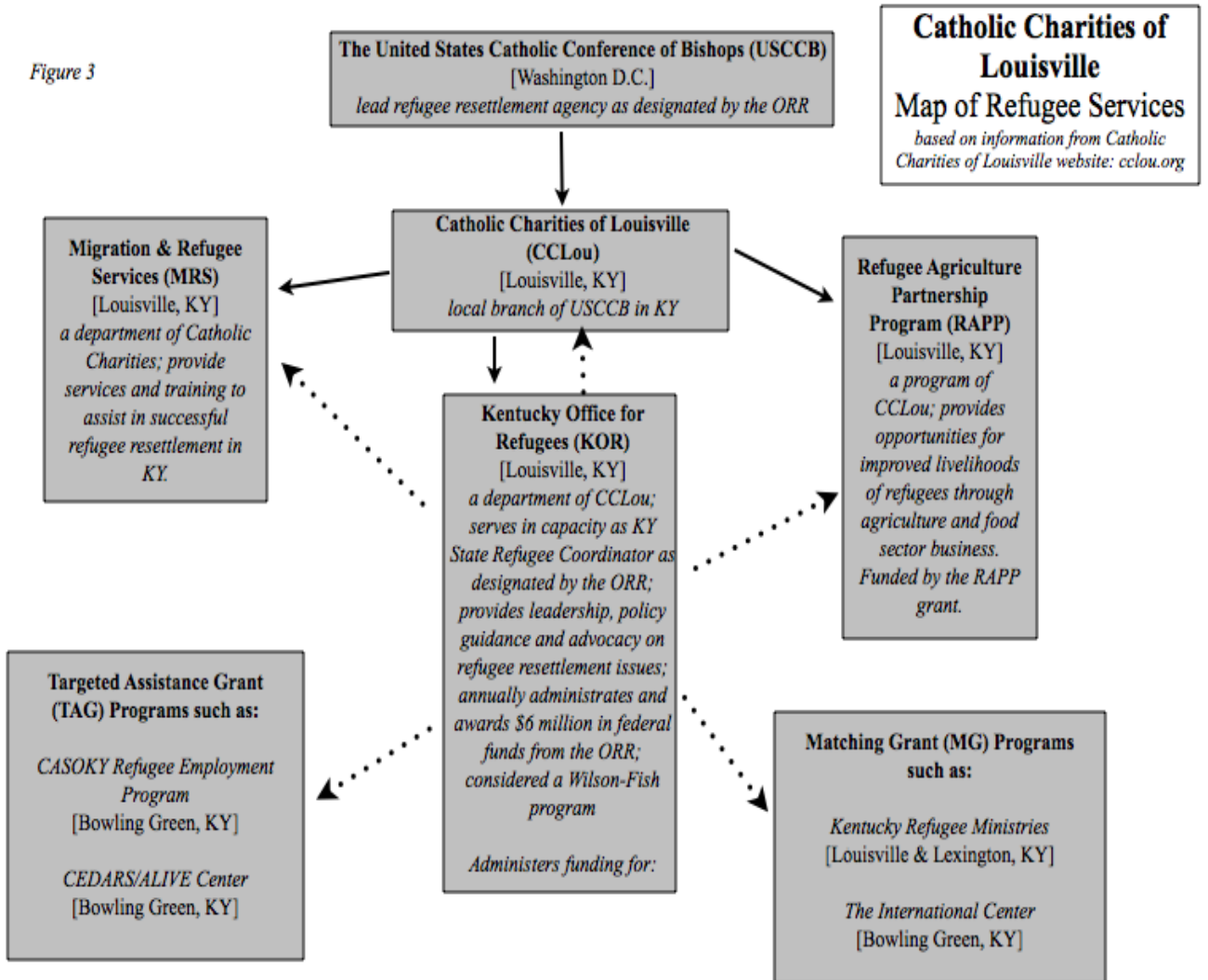
In addition to these organizations, there are several existing and developing programs that focus on refugee integration through economic self-sufficiency with both traditional and unconventional techniques. A more traditional approach is taken by Community Action of Southern Kentucky (CASOKY) in Bowling Green. In 2011, CASOKY designed The Refugee Employment Program to offer employment training and opportunities for refugees who have been resettled in the US between one and five years. The Refugee Employment Program assists both unemployed individuals and those who wish to improve their positions and skills by providing “employment counseling, job preparation workshops, financial assistance for transportation and employment-related expenses, job development, [and] referrals for services” (CASOKY, n.d.).

More unconventional approaches are taken by organizations like the Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program (RAPP) in Louisville. This program was established in 2007 under the Catholic Charities of Louisville umbrella and for the past six years has been funded by the RAPP grant awarded by the ORR. The RAPP provides refugees with access to four community gardens, offers educational meetings on farming and marketing, and helps connect refugee growers with local markets and restaurants. The program aims to establish a reciprocal relationship between refugee growers and local communities by “[enabling] refugees with backgrounds in farming to have increased

access to fresh, locally grown healthy foods...[and] provide locally grown produce to [...] the community as a whole” (CCLou, “RAPP”, n.d.). The RAPP is part of a growing trend to encourage the prevalence of refugee employment in agriculture, an industry which is essential to most of Kentucky. Such efforts have inspired similar community programs. For example, a collaborative project, called Food for All Community Garden (FA), is now being developed in Bowling Green between HOTEL INC (an organization aiding the homeless and hungry), Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission, and the Community Farmer’s Market. Like the RAPP in Louisville, FA uses agriculture to assist refugees by providing access to community garden plots, education workshops, and donations of produce to refugee families in need (Food for All Community Garden).

While keeping these organizations and programs in mind, the following chapter will take an extensive look at the Center for Development, Acculturation & Resolution Services (CEDARS), a developing non-profit organization in Bowling Green that offer assistance to refugees and their communities. This analysis will provide detailed descriptions of CEDARS’s history, mission, services and programs, structure, and approaches while comparing and contrasting it to several of the established organizations mentioned in this section.

Figure 3: Catholic Charities of Louisville Map of Refugee Services



CHAPTER 5

CASE-STUDY OF CEDARS

Background

In the years before founding the Center for Development, Acculturation & Resolution Services (CEDARS), Jennifer Bell worked as a clinical therapist in Nashville, TN. Laid off from her job, she moved to Bowling Green, where as a practicing Catholic she began attending Holy Spirit Catholic Church. After joining the church, Bell was asked to begin volunteering with some of the Burmese refugees, primarily of the Karen and Karenni ethnic groups, which had begun developing their faith at Holy Spirit. As she became more involved with the Burmese community, their many social-service needs became more apparent, for they were having difficulty finding and navigating healthcare, education, and employment systems. She then began to develop ideas for a social-service assistance organization in partnership with Holy Spirit. According to Bell, her vision for CEDARS was to “[draw a line] between faith formation and social service assistance, both of which [operate] from the model of the Catholic Church’s Social Justice [platform].” A little over a year after its creation, CEDARS was approved by Holy Spirit’s parish to be a ministry, or department, of the church, and Bell began working with Burmese, Burundian, and Iraqi refugee communities in Bowling Green, KY. Since its inception in 2011, CEDARS has operated under Bell’s stated goal of moving “towards a safe space for adaptation, understanding, and pathways to sustainability via education,

economic growth, community development, and collaboration” by “[striving] to bridge the gap between existing community resources and the ongoing-changing needs of refugees and international newcomers.”

By 2012, Bell and CEDARS had gained attention from other agencies in Kentucky, and the organization was asked to partner with Western Kentucky University’s (WKU) ALIVE Center Multicultural Services to receive Target Assistant Grant (TAG) funding. Nadia De Leon, the former community-engagement coordinator of ALIVE, said of the partnerships: “it was actually KOR [Kentucky Office for Refugees] from Louisville who came to us [...] and said ‘we are looking for someone to take these funds that are going to become available and do some of the things that are not being done...’.” Through this partnership and TAG funding, CEDARS was able to provide over 260 individuals with empowerment services such as drivers’ education classes, group counseling, life-skills education, and cultural and civic development. In addition, CEDARS provided community integration services, including advocacy, cultural awareness and sensitivity training, multicultural service-learning, and a refugee craft cooperative.

Research Questions

I was introduced to Jennifer Bell and CEDARS for the first time in the summer of 2012 as she was amid the chaos of developing and enacting programs designed for TAG funding. As a student seeking internship possibilities, I was linked with Bell through her connection with WKU’s ALIVE Center. Upon learning that I was an Anthropology major, the internship coordinators at the ALIVE Center matched me with the budding organization.

By the time I had spent just under two months shadowing Bell's consistently overwhelming schedule in her position as virtually the only employee of CEDARS, I became transfixed with the subculture of refugees and the agencies serving them within a town which I thought I knew. At my introduction to CEDARS, I had been living in Bowling Green for almost four years, and although I was aware of the presence of many immigrant students at my university, it was Bell who first brought the shockingly large refugee population to my attention.

The questions that led to the eventual production of this study were triggered by this initial information and my continued observation of CEDARS as an organization and its interaction with other agencies in town. Upon learning of the influx of refugees to be resettled in Bowling Green, I was curious to know how many refugees were being resettled in Kentucky and for how long, who determined their resettlement in places like Bowling Green and Louisville, and why this determination was made. In a general sense I wanted to understand the bureaucratic chain of command that was leading hundreds of refugees to Kentucky cities and towns. Concerning CEDARS and Bowling Green, I wondered how the refugee agencies interacted and collaborated with one another, how Bell organized and continues to shape CEDARS, how Bell went about meeting CEDARS' missions of empowerment and integration, and ultimately how CEDARS might evolve in Bowling Green.

Methodology

This study is a culmination of over eight months of fieldwork through participant-observation that included shadowing Bell at the office and during home visits to refugees. I also assisted with CEDARS' workshops and events, undertook a literature review,

conducted several interviews with Bell and employees of various refugee agencies in the area, and eventually became a teaching assistant for a CEDARS/WKU Multicultural Service-Learning course.

Because of my growing, close relationship with Bell and CEDARS, several ethical considerations arose regarding maintaining the objectivity of this study. First, this study was proposed to and approved by the WKU Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB), where my Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification was verified and methodology reviewed. All interviewees were asked to sign an HSRB-approved informed-consent document explaining the potential risks and intended outcome of their participation and were given the option to remain anonymous. As per WKU HSRB guidelines, CEDARS was informed of my ethnographic project. Refugees were considered an at-risk group because of their lack of English proficiency and were therefore not used for formal interviews although they were present during participant-observation. My personal relationship with CEDARS potentially put me at risk of producing a biased report, but I believe that the ethical considerations I maintained throughout this process allowed me to produce a more holistic description and analysis of CEDARS in its infancy, one that includes the *emic*, or subjective-insider perspective, as well as the *etic*, or objective-outsider perspective. My relationship with CEDARS as an intern was invaluable to the study by allowing me to have a closer look at the experiences of the agency. With this perspective, in addition to my effort to maintain my role as ethnographer and uphold ethical standards, I feel that I was able to produce a well-balanced view of this particular organization.

Observations

Straddling the edge of the US Bible Belt, Bowling Green, KY, lies just an hour north of Nashville and two hours south of Louisville. To hear of a refugee influx in either of these neighboring cities would come as a shock to few, as they are growing cosmopolitan metropolises, but to hear of such newcomers to a place like Bowling Green would surprise many that have grown familiar with its reputation as a small, quiet town that would be largely homogeneous without the presence of Western Kentucky University. Prior to 2011, the International Center was the only refugee agency operating in Bowling Green and was significantly overworked and understaffed due to a lack of financial and community support. By this time, the International Center was surrounded by years of controversy regarding both the center's and the city's treatment of recent waves of Bosnian, Iraqi, and Burmese refugees. The agency had committed itself to repairing its image by seeking new administrators. Additionally, Community Action of Southern Kentucky began focusing upon specific refugee needs, and the ALIVE Center developed its Multicultural Services department. Despite these improvements, missing links within this network of agencies became apparent. For example, there were limited resources and services available to refugees who had lived in the US for over five years. Also, refugees were having difficulty navigating available services, and there was a lack of communication and partnership between the agencies. Following a nationwide trend of interagency collaboration, Bell hoped to help fill those gaps with her creation of CEDARS (Morland et al., 2005).

My first assignment as Bell's intern was to shadow her for an afternoon during her weekly rounds of home-visits in the Karen and Karenni communities. She

drove me to two apartment complexes that sat just in the periphery of Bowling Green's major commercial artery. In these two particular complexes there was evidence of refugee attempts to make this new environment more familiar. For example, collective gardens could be found in the small patches of soil available, and traditional activities like weaving and playing games could be seen in driveways and courtyards. Despite these adaptations, the living conditions in these units were poor. Paint was cracked and peeling, bed-bugs and other pests infested many homes, and foundational structures were aged and disintegrating. Observing these conditions first hand was one of the catalysts for Bell's determination to start CEDARS and the work that the organization does. As she explained,

Some things really have to change and improve to continue for Bowling Green to [receive refugees]. You can't keep putting people in blight-infested slums right in the heart of town, or right on the outskirts of town[...]. There has to be a movement to integrate [refugees] more into the community [...] if people feel they have no control over their quality of life, they stop trying. It's only a matter of time until you have high schoolers graduating [...] that start gangs or start selling drugs because they don't like the options [available].

When asked to describe the nature of CEDARS' services, Bell usually references her average day of work. Spending significant amounts of time a day in her typical mother-of-three minivan packed full of binders, paperwork, calendars, and files, Bell commutes between Holy Spirit Catholic Church or the ALIVE Center, maintaining limited office hours at both, and WKU, where she assists a Multicultural Service-Learning course, and countless apartments and homes of individual refugees and families whom she checks on frequently. Because of limited of funding, Bell currently lacks the

luxury of having a permanent physical home for CEDARS or a paid staff to assist her in both direct services and administrative responsibilities. Without a true “home,” CEDARS is therefore chaotic and requires both passion and flexibility to navigate.

Community Partnerships

Despite its structural short-comings, CEDARS has been able to achieve remarkable goals in its infancy. To date, CEDARS has served around 300 refugees and has engaged hundreds of university students and Bowling Green citizens through education. All of these accomplishments have only been made possible through Bell’s commitment to emphasizing the importance of community partnerships, an element that has been influenced and strengthened by her work with the ALIVE Center. The list of collaborators and supporters of CEDARS’ programs is massive, including the International Center, United Way of Southern KY, ServiceOne Credit Union, Bowling Green Technical College, Community Action, Southern Kentucky Farmer’s Market, the Kentucky Office of Refugees, and most notably the ALIVE Center, WKU’s Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility (ICSR), and Holy Spirit Catholic Church.

CEDARS as a Faith-based Organization

Although Bell is in the process of transitioning CEDARS from a ministry of the church to an official not-for-profit organization, it will remain a faith-based organization. Religiously affiliated refugee agencies are not unique to the US or the state of Kentucky (five out of the nine federally approved resettlement agencies are religiously based), but CEDARS remains the only faith-based refugee organization in Bowling Green, and because of this it is sometimes stigmatized. For example, as Bell notes, “I think there’s an assumption from others that because you’re a faith-based organization your goal is to

evangelize and to get more members in your faith or to your church.” Legally, faith-based refugee agencies receiving federal funding are prohibited from proselytizing while providing services. Because of this, Bell actively dissuades these notions around town: “...if there is one thing that I absolutely do not do with clients it’s evangelize. I truly believe that everybody has a right to their own spiritual path, and if somebody’s on a path [I] link them with what they need or what they desire.”

Even though Bell ensures that CEDARS remains non-proselytizing, she is in no way secretive about CEDARS’ religious affiliation. For example, Holy Spirit is openly publicized as partner and sponsor of all events and services. Additionally, Bell refuses to provide services that directly contradict tenets of Catholicism, such as education on birth control and contraceptives. Although Bell tries to redirect clients seeking these types of resources to more appropriate organizations, restricting services to those which are Catholic-approved limits CEDARS’ reach and neutrality as well as affects volunteers and community groups which are willing to become affiliates. However, in some ways the organization’s position as faith-based has strengthened the quality of services that it does provide. As a result of the potential legal and moral risks that face CEDARS because of its status as a faith-based organization, Bell maintains strict ethical standards throughout every aspect of CEDARS’ services, including the requirement that volunteers participate in thorough ethical training and sign contracts stating behavioral obligations before beginning any work with clients.

TAG Funding with ALIVE Center

In 2011 the Kentucky Office for Refugees (KOR), which is responsible for distributing federal funding to Kentucky refugee agencies (see chapter 5), sought out

WKU ALIVE Center's newly created Multicultural Services department to be the new recipients of the Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG). TAG is a federal grant which funds programs that provide self-sufficiency and employment-related services to refugees after their initial years of resettlement in the country (Office of Refugee Resettlement [ORR], n.d.). When approached with the offer, Nadia De Leon, who was the head of Multicultural Services at the time and who had volunteered with CEDARS previously, immediately recognized the organization as the perfect partner for this funding.

To meet TAG requirements, De Leon and Bell developed a year's worth of programs for the CEDARS/ALIVE partnership. The workshops were designed around the partnership's goals of refugee empowerment and integration--two elements that they believed would directly impact successful employment and self-sufficiency.

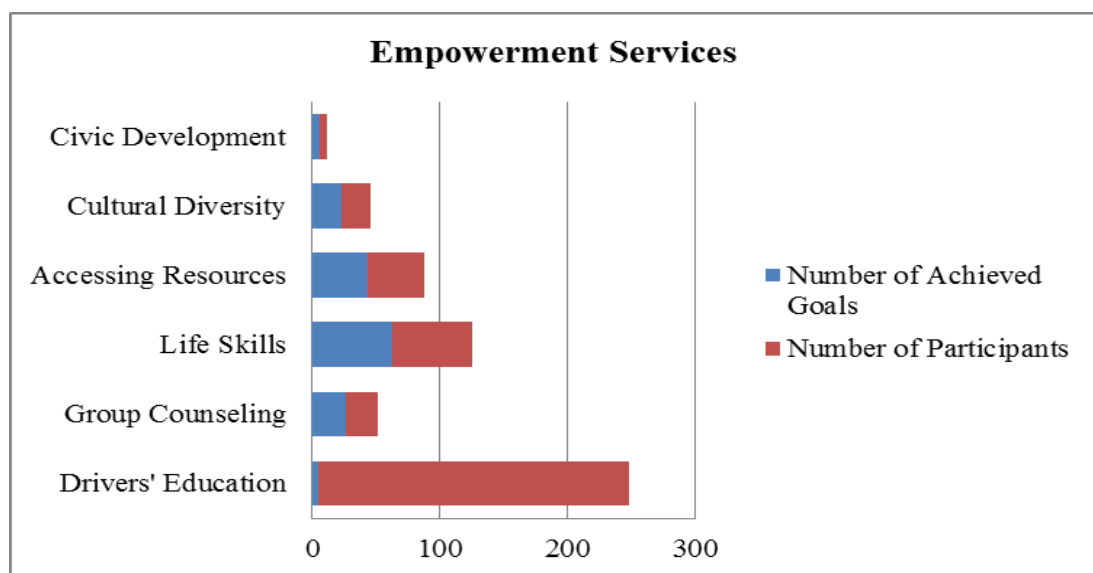
Empowerment Services

The goal of empowerment services is to encourage the various refugee communities in Bowling Green to develop their own community leaders and representatives, educate individuals on their legal rights and resources, and promote independence. The workshops developed to achieve these objectives included driver's education and automobile care, access to community farmers' markets, individual and group counseling, domestic violence information, financial consultation, and discussions of cultural norms surrounding parenting and home care.

Of this category of services, CEDARS had a total of 405 participants, the majority of whom attended the multiple driver's education workshops offered. Workshops were divided into language groups with sessions being held for speakers of Burmese, Karen,

Karenni, Swahili, Kirundi, French, and Somali. On several Saturday mornings buses of refugees from these language groups arrived at Holy Spirit Catholic Church to be given basic driver’s education. However, despite the high attendance level, there was a huge discrepancy between the number of participants present and the number of participants who achieved outcomes (in this case, obtaining valid drivers’ licenses) when compared to the other workshops, which all resulted in 100% of participants who achieved outcomes (see *figure 4*). This disparity can be attributed to two primary factors: Bowling Green currently has a limited number of interpreters to assist non-native English speakers in taking the oral portion of the driver’s exam as well as poor written translations of the test. Also, in order to meet quantitative goals set for TAG, the driver’s education workshops were administered to massive groups. Individualized work with refugees would have been necessary for many of them to overcome the language-based obstacles when seeking their licenses.

Figure 4: CEDARS’ Empowerment Services



Integration Services

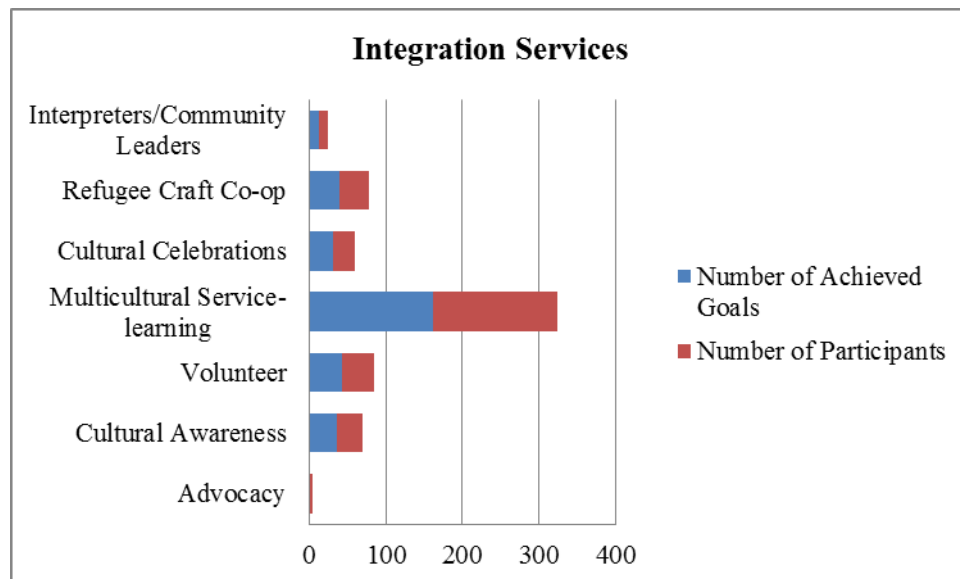
The focus of integration services is to emphasize acculturating, rather than assimilating, refugees to life in the US, to encourage the maintenance of native cultures, and to educate and engage the local community in volunteering and cultural exchange. This set of workshops and programs includes cultural awareness and sensitivity training for individuals and groups in the Bowling Green community, cultural celebrations at the city's International Fest, refugee training for interpreters and community leaders, the development of a refugee craft co-op called Community Threads, and Multicultural Service-Learning (MSL) courses at Western Kentucky University.

In this area of services the craft co-op and MSL courses have yielded the most substantial results (see *figure 5*). The development of Community Threads has directly impacted employment and self-sufficiency by allowing refugee women the opportunity to foster cultural sustainability by continuing the crafts of their native countries, to share their artisan culture with Bowling Green natives and other refugee communities, and to work with university students to market and sell their creations for an income. Similarly, the MSL courses have also provided opportunities for university students, many of whom were born and raised in Kentucky with limited cross-cultural experiences, to interact with refugee families in their community for the first time.

Although MSL courses at WKU predate the foundation and involvement of CEDARS, MSL through the TAG program has allowed for the collaboration between WKU's Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility (ICSR), the department of Anthropology & Folk Studies, The \$100 SolutionTM (THDS), and the refugee contacts

made by CEDARS. The MSL courses related to the CEDARS/ALIVE partnership have involved hundreds of university students and refugees. Students are educated on multicultural diversity in the US, paired with a group or family of refugees for weekly home visits, and are then given a \$100 grant and are asked to use the money to create a project that will improve the lives of their refugee family or community. As a teaching assistant for a MSL course at WKU, I have observed the impact of this program. Many students involved are being introduced to refugee subcultures in their communities for the first time, and most develop an awareness and understanding of the refugee experience. In addition, the nature of THDS requires students to involve their refugee families in the development of projects which serve to empower refugees by allowing their voices to be heard and ensure that their personally determined needs are met.

Figure 5: CEDARS' Integration Services



The Future of Funding

Through TAG, the CEDARS/ALIVE partnership programs would have been eligible for funding for a total of three years, but by the end of 2012 Bell was informed that WKU would be pulling out of the grant after just one year in order to refocus on the university's mission of dedicating resources to students. Initially shocked by this blow, Bell and CEDARS were forced into the position of rebuilding many elements of the organization from scratch. This elimination of CEDARS' primary funding source meant that Bell and her community leaders and interpreters risked not receiving any sort of income or compensation for their work. But with help from previously established community partnerships, Bell was able to transition her administrative headquarters back to Holy Spirit and seek new grants in preparation for CEDARS' future without TAG funding.

Despite this major setback, Bell remains optimistic about the future of CEDARS:

Well, it's kind of a blessing and a curse, I'm not able to have all these big numbers this year that I had last year because I'm not doing things in massive workshops, but this very much needed to happen because what I found myself doing last year was so focused on meeting the requirements of a grant that I was not able to organize CEDARS as much I would have liked.

CEDARS faces inevitable challenges in obtaining new sources of funding, but the flexibility that Bell has emphasized throughout the entire history of the organization is crucial to navigating the tentative future.

Interpretation

CEDARS' strengths and successes can largely be attributed to three primary elements: Bell's adherence to unfaltering ethical standards, the organizational approach taken with clients, and the network of community partnerships that has been established in the past two years. The ethics of CEDARS' work not only protect Bell and the organization from legal trouble, but also allow for the strong relationships with refugee clients. CEDARS has developed a reputation in the refugee communities, especially with the Burmese, of being trustworthy and treating individuals with humanitarian dignity-- both of which directly relate to the rigorous training and ethical standards that Bell maintains. Also related to these ethical standards is the combination of an individualized and holistic family-oriented approach that CEDARS and Bell take when working with clients. As Bell explains, "Refugees in general tend to be collective, so I might get an individual issue but typically when I go to meet with those individuals in their home I meet the whole family, and I actually request to meet the whole family." This approach allows Bell to foster the relationships CEDARS has within the refugee community and remain on top of tensions and needs as they arise. Lastly, CEDARS is strengthened by its partnerships and the emphasis it places on networks. Without this element, the most successful programs like MSL or Community Threads would not have been possible.

Like any organization, CEDARS also has its share of weaknesses and areas that require improvement. For example, Bell is in effect the only employee of CEDARS. Although through partnership with WKU she is able to offer unpaid internships and assistantships to students, she is responsible for the vast majority of case-management, direct services, and administrative responsibilities. As a result of being "over-worked and

under-staffed,” similar to the position in which the International Center found itself at its peak, CEDARS lacks certain organizational elements such as an active database of clients and volunteers and standardized manuals and files. These weaknesses can be largely attributed to the overwhelming nature of meeting TAG requirements and the current lack of funding. Bell remains aware of these areas of needed improvement and expects that new sources of funding will allow them to be addressed.

Even though there is currently a state-wide uncertainty concerning whether Kentucky will continue to admit consistently high numbers of refugees, it seems that there is a place and need for CEDARS. CEDARS’ emphasis on empowerment and integration appropriately reflects the refugee needs that will continue in Bowling Green. Even if admission levels are reduced dramatically by the state, the refugees that are already living in Bowling Green will continue to seek services because successful integration into the community is often a challenge for several years after initial resettlement. The non-TAG-funded future of CEDARS may prove to be beneficial because, as Bell states, “[we will] not [be] bound by certain federal parameters. If somebody needs something, it doesn’t have to link back to employment, it doesn’t have to link back to self-sufficiency. It can be as simple as somebody calling and saying they would like an advocate to go to the doctor with them.”

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF REFUGEE SERVICES IN KENTUCKY

The next five years mark a critical stage for the future of refugee services in Kentucky, and the results of this period will ultimately affect the state's reputation both nationally and internationally. In the past decade or so Kentucky has surprised many by gaining recognition for embracing globalization. As a state we are consistently becoming more diverse, which is in part due to the influence of major institutions like the University of Louisville, the University of Kentucky, and Western Kentucky University, which have emphasized cross-cultural education by encouraging study-abroad programs and by enrolling more international students. However, our reputation is still in its early stages and has yet to become affirmed. Our collective success or failure in managing refugee needs will be a crucial component in confirming Louisville and Bowling Green as multicultural, cosmopolitan cities that are attractive to investors and developers.

In Louisville, the future of the Catholic Charities' Migration and Refugee Services (MRS) and the Refugee Agriculture Partnership Program (RAPP), as well as the Kentucky Refugee Ministry (KRM), appears to be secure thanks to relatively stable funding. MRS, RAPP, and KRM have been instrumental in making Louisville the standard of success for evolving agencies in Bowling Green. The success of refugee organizations and programs in Louisville is enhanced by the size of the city and the methods used for refugee integration. Louisville is considerably larger than Bowling

Green and has a more developed infrastructure that supports relatively adequate public transportation in comparison to Bowling Green's GoBus, which has a limited route and infrequent schedule. The public bus system in Louisville has proven to be indispensable to the refugees' quality of life and job-placement options. Additionally, the agencies and programs in Louisville--the majority of which are older and thus more developed and experienced than those in Bowling Green--currently emphasize progressive approaches that promote successful local integration such as refugee community and leadership development, refugee employment in the service organizations, and refugee connections with the local community.

These strategies for refugee acculturation clearly mirror, and have undoubtedly influenced, CEDARS' objectives for empowerment and integration services in Bowling Green. These approaches, which CEDARS has already begun to adopt, will likely mature with the evolution of the organization and will be an unquestionable asset to its future growth and success.

Throughout the progress of this study I have found that some refugee studies scholars, and the majority of agency representatives that I interviewed in Bowling Green, have expressed apprehension about the future need for, and relevance of, refugee services in places like Kentucky. This doubt, especially in Bowling Green, is largely in response to the steady reduction in the city's annual refugee admissions (determined by ORR and KOR), which have been reduced from a yearly average of 450 or more individuals in the past five years to an estimated 350 individuals this year. Although it is likely that these numbers will continue to decrease in the coming years, I do not believe that the need for

refugee service organizations--particularly those similar to MRS, RAPP, KRM, or CEDARS--will diminish in Louisville or Bowling Green.

Even though decreased admission levels will likely result in a reduced demand for initial (up to eight months) and possibly intermediate (eight months to five years) resettlement services, the majority of refugees that have already been resettled will remain in Kentucky and continue to have needs that will have to be addressed. As the Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program (CWS/IRP) notes in a 2010 report, successful local integration is often a long process that for some can take an entire lifetime because of cultural, linguistic, and mental health barriers and factors (p. 20). For this reason, refugee services will not phase out any time soon but, instead, will transition from an emphasis on resettlement to a focus on integration and acculturation. This shift in priorities is already being pioneered in CEDARS' evolution and is the reason that, once fully developed, CEDARS and similar organizations will serve as a template for future refugee services in Kentucky.

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