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Capacity-Building Through English Language Training to Improve Long-Term Resettlement Success: A case study of the Refugees Along the Thailand-Burma Border

Lorelle W. Yuen
University of Denver

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CAPACITY-BUILDING THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING TO IMPROVE LONG-TERM RESETTLEMENT SUCCESS: A CASE STUDY OF THE REFUGEES ALONG THE THAILAND-BURMA BORDER

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies
University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Lorelle W. Yuen
November 2012
Advisor: Dr. Peter W. Van Arsdale
Abstract

Achieving long-term resettlement success is a challenge for many refugees seeking to restart their lives after displacement and being uprooted from their lives. Refugees must deal with finding employment, integrating into a society immensely different from what they have known their whole lives, and starting over from scratch.

Learning a new language enables refugees to progress towards integration and long-term resettlement success, however, resettled refugees face a multitude of barriers in the U.S. to accessing language classes and attaining English proficiency. This study seeks to bridge this problem by exploring the possibilities of implementing a standardized language training program in the refugee camps to better prepare refugees for resettlement. A case study of the refugees along the Thai-Burma border demonstrated the significance of learning English in the camps on eventual English proficiency as well as the need for increased partnerships to overcome the barriers of lack of motivation and lack of funding.

The author explores the possibilities of implementing a language training program in the camps by determining need, interest, barriers, and perceptions through the use of interviews, surveys, and focus groups of camp refugees, resettled refugees, and key organizational representatives. The significance of these results offers the possibility of
leveraging and unlocking resettlement as a durable solution for more of the world’s refugees in protracted situations.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Peter Van Arsdale for his unwavering support and guidance from the very beginning. I appreciate all the time you dedicated towards answering my phone calls and emails, your feedback, your sound advice, and cheerful encouragement.

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<td>CCSDPT</td>
<td>Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand</td>
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<td>DOS</td>
<td>Department of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<td>HCR</td>
<td>League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>HDR</td>
<td>Human Development Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRIRR</td>
<td>International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
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<td>IRC</td>
<td>International Rescue Committee</td>
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<td>IRO</td>
<td>International Refugee Organization</td>
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<td>KRCEE</td>
<td>Karen Refugee Camp Education Entity</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFE</td>
<td>Non-formal Education</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organizations</td>
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<td>NLD</td>
<td>National League for Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
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<td>ORR</td>
<td>Office of Refugee Resettlement</td>
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<td>PAB</td>
<td>Provisional Admissions Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRM</td>
<td>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>R&amp;P</td>
<td>Reception and Placement Program</td>
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<td>RSD</td>
<td>Refugee Status Determination</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLORC</td>
<td>State Law and Order Restoration Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPDC</td>
<td>State Peace and Development Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNRRA</td>
<td>United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>USDP</td>
<td>Union Solidarity and Development Party</td>
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<td>WE</td>
<td>World Education</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

A fifty-year-old illiterate woman living in Umphiem refugee camp along the Thai-Burma border is waiting to be resettled to the United States to join her twenty-five-year-old son who has already been resettled to the United States. She has been living in the camp for thirteen years now and she cannot speak English, but she wants to learn English to be able to communicate with others. She is not aware of any English classes being offered in the camps, but she thinks it is a good idea to offer English classes in the camp before resettlement. For her personally, though, she does not think it is a good idea to learn English because she is illiterate and plans to rely on her son when she resettles in the United States.

A fifty-four-year-old woman with one year of formal education resettled to Denver, Colorado from Mae La refugee camp along the Thai-Burma border three years ago. Her primary reason for choosing resettlement as a durable solution was to give her children the opportunity for education. She is unemployed and speaks very little English. She attended English classes for one month while her formerly unemployed brother watched her children, but she cannot attend classes anymore since her brother found a job; she must take care of her eight children now. Childcare is unaffordable and she also cannot spare money for the bus to get to English classes. She wishes English classes were offered in the refugee camp because she believes it would have been easier for her to
adjust to life in the United States. After three years in the United States, she still struggles to develop autonomy and self-sufficiency. She has no option but to rely on her children for everything: to communicate, read mail, answer phone calls, access healthcare and other key services.

The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) identified over seven million refugees as being in a protracted refugee situation in 2011 (Refugee Studies Centre, 2012). A protracted refugee situation is defined as one where a refugee has been in exile for more than five years. The average length of stay in these situations has nearly doubled in the past decade from nine years in the early 1990s to nearly twenty years today (Loescher and Milner, 2009). Unresolved intrastate conflict, persisting instability and insecurity in refugees’ homelands forces those exiled to live in a state of limbo in the confines of a camp. Those refugees unwilling or unable to go home because of fear of persecution or without the option of integrating in the country of first asylum opt for resettlement as their only safe and viable durable solution. However, resettlement oftentimes does not equate to an end to all the refugee’s problems, but rather the beginning of a new set of complex problems. Refugee flows have been changing and increasing; the majority of refugees come from developing countries now and they often have little to no exposure to the Western world. Transition to life in the receiving country is particularly challenging but unnecessarily so because of inadequate pre-departure orientation and lack of preparation. The reality that many refugees do not achieve self-sufficiency begs the question whether resettlement truly is a durable solution.

According to the UNHCR’s governing Executive Committee, “resettlement is only a truly durable solution if refugees are able to integrate in their countries of
resettlement” (“Progress report on resettlement”, 2012). Integration is a process involving pre-departure orientation, target language training, skills development, employment, and access to key services among other indicators (Dwyer, 2010, p. 13). The ultimate goal of refugee resettlement is self-sufficiency for the United States, however, many resettled refugees struggle to achieve autonomy even after several years due to the barriers they face in successfully integrating.

Achieving target language proficiency plays a key role in the ability of refugees to achieve integration and long-term resettlement because the problems refugees face stem from their lack of language proficiency. Language proficiency enables refugees to gain employment, access services, participate in their communities, and gain autonomy and self-sufficiency. However, expensive childcare, transportation costs, work schedules, and lack of information about English classes bar refugees from accessing the language classes in their country of resettlement. These barriers have contributed to the persistently low levels of target language proficiency among resettled refugees, especially those from Southeast Asia in the United States, which an increasingly large percentage have been empirically found to arrive with no English proficiency (Haines, 1988, p. 129). These low levels of proficiency may heighten the vulnerability of refugees and their susceptibility to exploitation, highlighting the importance of language proficiency.

The receiving country also faces challenges in sufficiently provisioning services like language classes to refugees. For example, in the United States, the refugee resettlement program lacks a coherent national policy on refugee integration, overemphasizes quick employment to the detriment of language learning, and lacks standardization of service provision across states. Church World Service, one of the nine
major private resettlement agencies that partners with federal agencies to resettle
refugees, voiced “if the refugees were offered English language courses while they were
in refugee camps or in their pre-arrival locations, they would be better prepared for the
English language courses in the U.S.” (Dwyer, 2010, p. 19). Data from the Office of
Refugee Resettlement also indicate the improvement of English among Southeast Asian
refugees arriving after 1981 in comparison to 1979-1981 when there were increased
efforts at pre-arrival English language training in the overseas refugee processing centers
prior to resettlement (Haines, 1988, p. 198). However, these language training classes
represent only a short-lived effort to prepare refugees for resettlement despite the
persisting need for these language training classes today. This issue is of increasing
importance because refugee flows are growing and becoming more complex as a result of
an increasing number of intrastate conflicts in the developing world. In order for the
international community and the UNHCR to meet the increasingly complex needs of the
refugees with limited resources, the evolving refugee regime must adopt innovative and
preemptive approaches to address the global governance problem resettled refugees face.
There is also a need to create and strengthen upstream and downstream linkages in terms
of linking preparatory target language classes at the refugee camp level to long-term
resettlement success in the country of resettlement.

Thus, I became interested to study the prospects of preparing refugees from
protracted refugee situations through standardized language training programs in the
refugee camps to make resettlement truly a durable solution. Preparation has the potential
of innovatively alleviating the current problems associated with resettlement.
I explore the questions:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of learning English in the refugee camps versus in the third country of resettlement?

2. What are the possibilities of implementing a formalized English language training program in the refugee camps to improve resettlement and accelerate integration?

I approach these questions using mixed methods in order to gain breadth and depth of understanding and to triangulate my findings. I utilize semi-structured interviews, surveys, and focus groups and target four distinct populations: refugees (camp and resettled), non-governmental organization representatives, international organization representatives, and government officials. Thematic analysis and cross-tabulation analysis using the chi-square test are used to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data, respectively. I chose to study the refugee situation along the Thai-Burma border as a case study because it is one of the longest running protracted refugee situations in the world. Resettlement remains the only viable option for this group of refugees because repatriation is unlikely in the near future and local integration is prohibited by Thai law. Some of the refugees have been encamped for nearly three decades which has created a sense of dependency among the refugee population. The majority of the refugees from Burma were formerly agricultural workers, have little to no formal education, and come from illiterate societies. These factors contribute to the enhanced difficulties this refugee population faces with resettlement and integration. Given the protracted nature of this refugee situation and the U.S.’s long-running mass resettlement program with this
refugee population, the service providers have become well-acquainted with the needs and challenges this population faces with resettlement, making it a moral imperative to better prepare these refugees for a resettlement that is durable.

Research Objectives

The following objectives outline the primary research aims of this study:

- To explore the possibilities of implementing a formalized English language training program in the refugee camps to improve long-term resettlement success

- To quantitatively and qualitatively assess the importance and advantages of learning English in the refugee camps versus in the third country of resettlement

- To qualitatively assess and compare the barriers to language acquisition in the camp versus in the third country

- To qualitatively evaluate the perceptions of camp refugees, resettled refugees, and service providers on the idea of implementing formalized target language classes in the refugee camps prior to resettlement

Scope of Study

This study seeks to focus on the adult refugees from Burma because refugee youth exhibit a greater ability to acquire the target language and integrate faster than
adult refugees in the third country. The study also focuses on English as the target language and the U.S. as the third country of resettlement because it resettles the majority of the world’s refugees. Also, the U.S. resettlement program utilizes an employment-first approach which provokes a multitude of challenges to the resettled refugees in acquiring language proficiency. Finally, the study does not intend to create an execution plan for establishing a formal language training program, but rather aims to explore the possibilities of implementing a formal English language program in the refugee camps based on need, interest, challenges, and perceptions. I discuss the possibilities of a language training program in the camp and formulate broad recommendations based on the preliminary findings of this exploratory study to shape the dialogue of resettlement as a durable solution and to serve as a jumping point for further studies on this innovative topic.

In this paper, I argue that English language classes in the camps will be more beneficial for the long-term resettlement success of refugees to the U.S. However, the current complex operational environment prevents the fruition of this idea; a more innovative network approach is necessary to address this resettlement challenge. I provide contextual information to the case study in Section II, discuss relevant studies and bodies of knowledge in Section III, methodology in Section IV, results in Section V, and then I discuss my results and suggest recommendations in Section VI, and conclude in Section VII.
CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXT

History of Burma

Prior to colonial and subsequent military rule, Burma was composed of various territories ruled by various ethnic groups. The Burman group, the largest ethnic group, occupied the central part of Burma while the Shan, Mon, Karen, Karenni, Chin, Kachin, and Arakanese ethnic minority groups occupied surrounding border areas. These ethnic groups historically had kingdoms and principalities of their own (The International Human Rights Clinic, 2009).

In 1885, the British successfully colonized Burma and was said to favor certain ethnic groups, such as the Burman group, over others to the detriment of ethnic relations. During World War II, Japan took control of Burma. However, momentum for Burma’s independence was gained under General Aung San, who led the Burma Independence Army. In 1945, General Aung San and the British liberated Burma from Japan. Following the war, Burmese nationalists fought to gain independence from Britain and General Aung San gained the cooperation of the ethnic nationalities and formed a federal union of Burma through the Panglong Agreement in 1947. The agreement instituted a “principle of equality” among the Burmans and ethnic minority groups as well as established a preliminary foundation for a federal union giving political autonomy to the ethnic nationalities. However, on July 19, 1947, General Aung San and the other leaders of Burma’s independence movement were assassinated. Despite the death of General Aung
San, ideals for the country’s independence and the establishment of democracy were not lost. A new constitution was instituted later in the year, a parliamentary democracy was created, and independence was finally granted in 1948. With the new constitution, states were autonomous and ethnic nationalities had the constitutional right to secede from the federal union after ten years, however, the successors of General Aung San were not as trustworthy. The people of Burma feared they would not uphold these promises (The International Human Rights Clinic, 2009).

Consequently, disagreements, political tensions, and fear of loss of autonomy under the new government led to armed conflict between numerous ethnic nationalities and the Burmese Army by 1960. Military leaders also began criticizing the new parliamentary government and the constraints on their powers. In 1962, General Ne Win staged a coup, beginning the era of military rule that would last for nearly five decades (The International Human Rights Clinic, 2009).

Ne Win kept Burma in isolation for three and a half decades and established the Four Cuts strategy aimed at cutting insurgents off from four crucial links: food, money, information, and recruits. In order to implement this policy, the regime outlawed all contact with resistance groups, and the policy led to thousands of civilian deaths and the destruction of crops and villages. All political opposition was suppressed as well. Despite Burma’s vast amounts of natural resources, the economy was left stagnant due to economic mismanagement, causing severe currency devaluation and the collapse of the economy by 1987 (The International Human Rights Clinic, 2009).
As a result, large student-led demonstrations transpired, leading to a major peaceful protest involving hundreds of thousands calling for democracy in the streets on August 8, 1988 in what was known as the 8888 Uprising. In response, the military regime took up arms against the protestors and killed an estimated 3,000 unarmed civilians. Following the massacre, the military regime reorganized their leadership under the name State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). This military regime became characterized by their political oppression, disregard for human rights, and lack of movement towards democracy. However, in 1992, General Than Shwe took over and the regime changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997. The regime later reorganized in November 2010 and became known as the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) following the elections (The International Human Rights Clinic, 2009).

As the Burmese army sought to gain control of border regions, armed conflict ensued in the 1990s, weakening ethnic movements. Military campaigns against ethnic nationality groups throughout the 1990s further led to human rights violations and displacement internally and into neighboring countries. In 1992, an estimated 250,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh, and by the end of the 1990s, heavy shelling and attacks on the Karen and Shan forced hundreds of villages in these states to relocate, resulting in over 100,000 refugees living on the Thai side in refugee camps (The International Human Rights Clinic, 2009).

In 2003, after Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest, regime supporters attacked her supporters when she was organizing her opposition party, the
National League for Democracy (NLD), resulting in what was known as the Depayin Massacre and her return to house arrest. Furthermore, in August 2007, the regime’s sudden removal of fuel subsidies sparked peaceful demonstrations by the Buddhist monks. The regime responded to the peaceful protests by beating and persecuting the monks in the streets in what is known as the Saffron Revolution.

In November 2010, Aung San Suu Kyi was finally released from house arrest after disputed elections. In March 2011, the military-backed government switched to a nominal civilian government with former General Thein Sein as President. Democratic changes have been felt; however, the international community remains skeptical of whether these calculative changes are to gain temporary international support.

Burma has been gaining the favor of Western nations through the restructuring of its government system to become more accountable and transparent, passing new legislation, and instituting other significant domestic reforms. President Thein Sein conceded to the demands of the international community and released about thirty percent of political prisoners for the first time without conditions attached, publically divulged Burma’s foreign debt for the first time, and suspended the widely unpopular construction of the Myitsone dam in Kachin State near the border of China and Burma (Lall, 2011). Furthermore, the government invited foreign election monitors during its by-elections held in April 2012 to increase the transparency of the process and initiated talks with opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. As a result, the NLD won 40 out of the 45 seats at stake and for the first time is a Member of Parliament (Dyer, 2012).
Burma has also demonstrated its efforts to enact more permanent changes through the adoption of the following key pieces of legislation: the “Law Amending the Political Parties Registration Law” which facilitates the return of the major opposition party, NLD, to the formal political process; the pending “Law Relating to Peaceful Gathering and Peaceful Procession” that puts in place a degree of freedom of assembly in a context where previously there had been none; and the “Labor Organization Law” which provides the right to strike and to form independent trades unions and employers’ organizations up to the international standard of freedom of association (International Crisis Group, 2012). Previously, all independent trades unions were banned. The debates in the legislatures on draft laws and motions have been reported to be “remarkably open and dynamic” in a Parliament whose meetings have previously been seen as a joke (“Pragmatic Virtues,” 2012). Furthermore, the checks-and-balances system on the executive branch have been used for the first time: government ministers are being questioned; bills submitted by the executive are subject to scrutiny and amendment; and changes recommended by the President to bills he returns unsigned are not always adopted (International Crisis Group, 2012).

The government has also expanded freedom of expression over the past year, allowing citizens an unrestricted access to political content for the first time. Restrictions on 30,000 blocked internet sites were lifted, including the lifting of blocks on international and exiled media, opposition and advocacy groups, and social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (International Crisis Group, 2012). The government has also relaxed censorship of print media. Business magazines and
entertainment and sport publications are permitted to publish without pre-publication approval for the first time; however, news publications still remain subject to approval by a censor board prior to publication.

The government of Burma has made sufficient changes and initiatives that the international community has deemed genuine enough to begin cooperating with the government. Most significantly, the United States has rewarded Burma for its reforms through the unwinding of business sanctions and the naming of the first U.S. Ambassador to Burma in twenty-two years (Win and Yadana, 2012). As a result of relaxed business sanctions, American financial services and investments can now be exported across certain sectors of Burma’s economy. The European Union and Australia have also made similar suspensions on sanctions. The relaxation on the sanctions will allow Burma to trade more freely with the Western nations.

President Thein Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi’s ongoing dialogues have also legitimized the reforms of the past year. Many Western nations including the United States have looked to Aung San Suu Kyi for advice before rewarding Burma for its changes, such as when the U.S. awaited Aung San Suu Kyi’s consent before suspending sanctions. As a result of Aung San Suu Kyi’s support for President Thein Sein and the recent democratic reforms, international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund have accepted an invitation by the Burmese government to fix its multiple exchange rate system and its macroeconomic policies. Furthermore, Burma has also initiated unprecedented invitations of human rights monitors and election monitors.
in its country. In the past, the Burmese government has created barriers and other forms of deterrence of foreign human rights monitors and election monitors in its country.

The Burmese government has also signed cease-fire agreements with the eleven ethnic nationality groups and has taken steps to end a six decade long war with the Karen. However, clashes remain ongoing in Kachin state between the Kachin Independence Army and Burma Army. Additionally, discriminatory policies and attitudes toward the Muslims in Rakhine state demonstrate Burma’s instability and test the legitimacy of Burma’s reformed civilian government. Ethnic violence erupted in June 2012 in Rakhine state between the Arakan Buddhists and Muslim Rohingya. Although both groups were responsible for the attacks at the outset, reports indicate increased retaliation targeting the Rohingya conducted by local security forces with impunity for which the national government of Burma is responsible (Aslan, 2012). In response, the Burma government formed a committee to objectively investigate the causes of the clashes (Weng and Thar, 2012); however, President Thein Sein also controversially suggested that the 800,000 Rohingya be put in refugee camps to be resettled to third countries (Aslan, 2012). These recent events suggest the continual instability and lack of rule of law in Burma. There also remains a concern that the government will reverse changes because of the constitutional power the military exercises over the government.
Refugees along the Thai-Burma Border

Nine refugee camps dot the border along Thailand and Burma. Camp populations of registered refugees range from as low as 1,875 to as large as 26,919 (Thai Burma Border Consortium, 2012). Including unregistered refugees, camp populations are recorded to be up to 49,291 as of July 2012 (Thai Burma Border Consortium, 2012). Table 1 delineates camps and their corresponding population numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camp Name</th>
<th>Unregistered Population</th>
<th>Registered Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mae La</td>
<td>49,291</td>
<td>26,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mae Ra Ma Luang</td>
<td>16,479</td>
<td>9,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umphiem</td>
<td>17,760</td>
<td>10,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nu Po</td>
<td>15,817</td>
<td>8,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mae La Oon</td>
<td>14,699</td>
<td>9,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban Mae Nai Soi</td>
<td>13,805</td>
<td>10,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tham Hin</td>
<td>7,280</td>
<td>4,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban Don Yang</td>
<td>3,828</td>
<td>2,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban Mae Surin</td>
<td>3,679</td>
<td>1,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>142,638</strong></td>
<td><strong>85,418</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Refugee camp and corresponding population figures, July, 2012 (Thai Burma Border Consortium, 2012)

Thailand hosts approximately 92,000 registered and 54,000 unregistered refugees in camps (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2012, p. 220). Refugees from Burma began arriving in the 1980s and it has evolved into one of the most protracted refugee situations in the world. Sporadic fighting in southeast Burma and along the border areas contribute to the steady flow of new entrants to the camps each year. For example, clashes between armed ethnic groups and the Burma army following the general election in November 2010 resulted in a large influx of 16,000 to 18,000 refugees to Thailand (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2012, p. 220). More recently, there has been fighting in Kachin State and
northern Rakhine State which has increased refugee flows to China and Bangladesh, respectively.

Up until January 2004, UNHCR was in charge of conducting full Refugee Status Determination (RSD), however, refugees arriving after January 2004 could only register with the UNHCR and obtain a slip. They could not gain refugee status because the Thai authorities were concerned the UNHCR’s RSD process would create a pull effect of refugees from Burma into Thailand (Lee and Glaister, 2008). Thus, those arriving after November 2005 were left without protection or a durable solution because they did not have an opportunity to register or receive any form of documentation (Lee and Glaister, 2008). In September 2006, admission to the refugee camps shifted from being governed by UNHCR to being controlled by Thailand’s Provincial Admissions Board (PAB) process; however, the majority of asylum seekers after January 2004 still remained without protection because of the switch in processes. Despite Thailand’s efforts to control refugee inflows through the PAB mechanism, the unregistered refugee population continues to grow.

The international community and international organizations such as the UNHCR face difficulties in exercising their mandates and upholding Thailand to international standards and customary international law such as non-refoulement because Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. Under Thai immigration law, refugees and asylum seekers living outside the camps are treated as illegal migrants and are subject to arrest, detention, and deportation. The Thai government perceives refugees as a security concern and places many restrictions on
them, such as prohibition to work. Consequently, the refugees in Thailand are dependent on aid and are unable to develop their coping mechanisms (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2012). This prolonged confinement has led to social, psychological, and protection concerns of many refugees (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2012).

Resettlement was introduced to the refugees in the Thailand camps in 2005 and has provided solutions to approximately 70,000 refugees (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2012, p. 221). Refugees have been resettled to third countries including the U.S., Australia, Canada, England, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, New Zealand, Belgium, and Japan. However, despite an ongoing mass resettlement program, the camp population is not expected to decrease rapidly because of the growing unregistered population and steady flow of new entrants.

The futures of approximately 54,000 unregistered refugees still remain in limbo because the Thai government suspended the PAB process. UNHCR seeks to expand the protection space for refugees by reconvening the PAB to register the growing unregistered population. UNHCR also aims to screen refugees entitled to family reunification and seek out durable solutions for the refugees. The three durable solutions offered by the UNHCR include: 1) voluntary repatriation; 2) local integration in the host country; and 3) resettlement to a third country. Local integration in Thailand is not an option by the Thai government and voluntary repatriation depends on individual refugees and the security in Burma. During the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres trip to Thailand and Burma in July 2012, he voiced UNHCR’s desire to help Burma prepare for voluntary returns which he stressed must be conducted in safety and
dignity (McKinsey, 2012). Guterres also noted conditions are not ripe for sustainable return, which leaves resettlement as the main durable solution for the refugees of Burma for now.

**U.S. Resettlement Program**

The U.S. has resettled over three million refugees since 1975. Admission figures range from as low as 27,110 in 2002 to as high as 207,000 in 1980 with the average number admitted annually reaching approximately 98,000 (Refugee Council USA, 2012). The U.S. resettlement program for refugees from Burma began in 2005 and the refugees from Burma have consistently remained one of the highest numbers of refugees admitted by the U.S. each fiscal year. In fiscal year 2009, the U.S. admitted 18,202 refugees from Burma (U.S. State Department, 2009) and in fiscal year 2011 it admitted 16,972 refugees (U.S. State Department, 2012).

Resettlement as a tool of protection in the U.S. refugee program evolved in the aftermath of World War II. The U.S. admitted over 250,000 displaced Europeans and after the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 was enacted, an additional 400,000 displaced Europeans were admitted (Refugee Council USA, 2012). The program evolved as a Cold War tactic. It sought to provide protection to refugees fleeing persecution from communist or communist-dominated countries such as Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Korea, China, and Cuba (Refugee Council USA, 2012).

The Refugee Act of 1980 replaced the Cold War rationale for the resettlement program. It provides a legal and humanitarian basis for the U.S. resettlement program
incorporating the definition of ‘refugee’ and a basis for selecting refugees for admission to the U.S. The Refugee Admissions Program is administered by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and the Department of Homeland Security. The public sector works in conjunction with nine private national refugee resettlement agencies (also known as voluntary agencies or volags) in a public-private partnership to assist the newly arrived refugees.

New refugee arrivals are assisted through two disparate programs. The first program, known as the Reception and Placement Program (R&P Program), is administered by the Department of State (DOS) through PRM. The DOS works in conjunction with the resettlement agencies to provide refugees with initial resettlement services and referrals to other services as needed. PRM funds the R&P Program through a grant which provides $1,800 per refugee for ninety days. During this time period, the resettlement agencies are responsible for assuring the majority of services are provided such as food, housing, medical care, employment, counseling, education, and other necessary services (USA for UNHCR, 2012). The second program is administered by ORR and aims to provide transitional assistance to refugees through cash assistance, medical assistance, and employment-related services. These services are available for up to eight months and focus on helping refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment as soon as possible after their arrival (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011).

The U.S. resettlement program aims to focus on refugees whose need for protection is long-term and can only be resolved outside their own country (Newland,
Offering resettlement as an option is often used as a strategic tool in securing access to countries of first asylum to provide aid and protecting other refugees that do not opt for resettlement. Some countries of first asylum, such as Thailand, are not signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention and do not uphold their international obligations to host the refugees with dignity and respect. In the absence of countries pledging to remove the refugee load through resettlement, some countries close their borders (Newland, 1996, p. 12). This tactic demonstrates the complexities of offering resettlement, especially when first-asylum countries “demand it as a price to meet their obligations” (Newland, 1996, p. 12).

Refugees resettling to the U.S. often come ill-prepared and with high expectations; however, resettlement has the potential to bring benefits to the United States and other countries of resettlement if investments are made in language and vocational training (Newland, 1995, p. 13). It can bring long-term economic benefits as well as add to the U.S.’s reservoir of human capital. However, resettlement also risks being burdensome to communities especially when local resettlement agencies are not provided with sufficient federal government support to meet the needs of the refugees.
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are four disparate bodies of knowledge used to frame this study. These include the evolution of the refugee regime to adapt to global governance challenges, resettlement challenges, language acquisition, and global public policy networks.

Evolution of the Refugee Regime to adapt to Global Governance Challenges

The refugee regime has evolved synchronously with the changing international system to meet global challenges over time. Refugee protection was based on Westphalian notions of sovereignty which is being challenged today in the debate over whether refugee protection should stick to a strictly state-centered framework or shift toward a human rights framework centered on the needs of the refugees (Newland, 2001). The agenda for international response to refugee issues has been shaped by the diverse political interests of powerful states, causing a lack of coherence of the management of refugee issues (Newland, 2001). Long-running refugee issues tend to fall lower on the agenda of policy concern despite the disheartening number of protracted refugee situations in the world. Additionally, many of the contemporary challenges the refugee regime faces are interconnected in multiple issue areas like migration, security, development, and peace-building which require the coordination of a variety of actors, not just the sole efforts of the UNHCR (Loescher and Milner, 2011). This section
demonstrates the adaptability of the refugee regime from the establishment of a refugee regime structure to meet the growing permanence of the refugee problem, to expanding the scope and mandate of UNHCR to set norms and improve service provision, and to the development of innovative strategies to address the increasingly complex global challenges in light of limited resources.

Before a clear refugee regime was established among nations, each nation acted individually on an ad hoc basis. There was no need for groups or established policies to deal with refugees because refugees were not a cause of strain in international relations. However, the refugee regime began taking on an international shape in 1789 when refugees began to represent potential shifts in the European balance of power (Barnett, 2002, p. 241). The refugee regime emerged under the League of Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) after World War I and in 1933, the Convention Relating to the International Status of Refugees officially defined refugee status. However, World War II marked a new period of upheaval and displacement which led to the dissolution of the League of Nations. The United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Agency (UNRRA) was created in 1944, however, Cold War tensions provoked UNRRA’s dissolution in 1947 and the International Refugee Organization (IRO) was established as a temporary intergovernmental UN agency in 1948 to serve those still left in the camps. Under the IRO, the definition of refugees shifted its focus to individuals from categories of people; this change has made refugee determination based on a case-by-case basis as it is today (Barnett, 2002). The international community began to realize that the refugee problem sparked by World War II would not be a temporary one and in
1951 the UNHCR was established as a permanent framework to replace the IRO. The creation of the UNHCR represented the increasingly global scope and permanence of the refugee problem (Barnett, 2002). It was founded with a mandate to provide international protection to refugees and to seek a permanent solution to the problem in cooperation with national governments, non-governmental organizations, and international organization (Barnett, 2002). Article 1A of the 1951 Convention established the universal refugee definition:

the term ‘refugee’ shall apply to any person who…owing to 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 or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Barnett, 2002, p. 246).

Globalization of the refugee issue further sparked the expansion of the Convention’s mandate. The 1967 Protocol to the Convention waived temporal and geographic limitations of the refugee definition allowing for more universal application (Barnett, 2002). Regional agreements have also broadened the term ‘refugee’ to cover people in need of assistance and protection in diverse situations. The Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1969 expanded the definition to “a person fleeing ‘external aggression, internal civil strife, or events seriously disturbing public order’ in African countries” (Loescher and Milner, 2011, p. 191). Furthermore in Central America, the Cartagena Declaration of 1984 broadened the Convention definition to be more inclusive; it defines the term ‘refugee’ as:
persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order (Loescher and Milner, 2011, p. 191).

As a norm producer within the refugee regime, UNHCR’s scope and mandate has expanded and adapted over time. In the 1970s, the economic collapse triggered the tightening of restrictions throughout the West. Refugee flows became larger and more complex than the past, causing UNHCR to expand its role. Host countries were less willing to receive refugees that were now mainly coming from developing countries instead of the eastern Communist-bloc countries. In the 1980s, UNHCR began to shift its role from its traditional focus on legal protection to providing assistance to refugees in camps and in protracted situations. In the 1990s, it began engaging in repatriation operations and further expanded its role to humanitarian relief. By the late 1990s and early twenty-first century, UNHCR began taking responsibility for victims of certain major natural disasters and the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The expansion into these new areas has been controversial because of concerns that states may contradict or undermine UNHCR’s refugee protection mandate (Loescher and Milner, 2011, p. 194-194).

The post-Cold War years have sparked political and ethnic conflicts which have led to mass migrations all over the world (Barnett, 2002). In response, states, specifically the industrial Northern states, sought to shift their responsibility to other actors, such as the countries of first asylum, and avoided additional responsibilities that UNHCR has taken on over the years (Loescher and Milner, 2011, p. 194-195). According to Newland (2001), “management of refugee issues in the post-Cold War period has therefore been
mostly ad hoc and crisis driven, aimed at least as much at protecting the wealthy
industrialized countries from refugees as at protecting refugees from their persecutors”
(Newland, 2001, p. 522-523). However, according to Barnett (2002), UNHCR has taken
on a more solution-oriented role using more pro-active and preventative approaches
(Barnett, 2002, p. 251). Despite UNHCR’s new approaches, the political and economic
priorities of states have blocked the benefits from the improved refugee system being felt.

States have been denying refugees their social and economic rights contained in
the 1951 Convention by placing limits on the quality of asylum they offer. For example,
the Convention defines a list of rights for refugees such as non-refoulement, access to
national courts, and right to employment and education; however, many states in the
South bearing the burden of hosting refugees deny refugees freedom of movement and
the right to seek employment. They “require refugees to remain in isolated and insecure
refugee camps, cut off from the local community, and fully depending on dwindling
international assistance” (Loescher and Milner, 2011, p. 197). Consequently, when states
remain uncooperative and unwilling to incorporate international obligations into their
national policies, UNHCR out of necessity stretches its limited resources to cover its new
functions which have effectively become part of the refugee regime (Barnett, 2001, p.
261). This changing international context has challenged UNHCR to uphold the norms of
the refugee regime and to encourage international cooperation while simultaneously
endeavoring to accommodate new refugee issues.

According to Barnett, states face compassion fatigue and are unwilling to
incorporate international obligations into their national policies (Barnett, 2001, p. 261).
Instead, states tend to frame issues to satisfy their interests (Barnett, 2001, p. 261). UNHCR launched the Global Consultations on International Protection in 2000 to address this divergence between the protection needs of refugees and the interests of states within the global refugee regime. The Global Consultations initiative brought together states from the North and South, non-governmental organizations, experts in refugee law, and UNHCR to explore the scope for enhancing refugee protection through new approaches (Loescher and Milner, 2011). One of the outcomes was the Agenda for Protection which called for actors within the refugee regime to enhance burden sharing with countries of first asylum, make durable solutions more predictable, and address specific protection needs of women and children. Although the Global Consultations represented great initiative by organizations towards enhancing cooperation to meet the protection needs of refugees, the impact has been limited.

There is room for civil society to play a prominent role in the refugee regime to enable UNHCR to continue being of significant value in a growing environment where national governments refuse to comply with international law. UNHCR remains the only organization with the specific mandate to ensure the protection of refugees and with a clear responsibility of supervising the wider refugee regime, however, the structure of the organization hurts and benefits its ability to govern. It is structurally and operationally linked to a wide range of actors which allows it to play a central role in the global governance of refugees, but the diverse agendas of organizations and states threatens to erode UNHCR’s power and influence (Loescher and Milner, 2011). According to Barnett, “the model of global governance that best suits the refugee regime is that already
represented by UNHCR, complemented by various regional networks. But this is a model that needs to be reworked to recognize the changing realities of the international system” (Barnett, 2001, p. 262).

Refugee issues are becoming increasingly urgent because the majority of the refugees permanently live in camps intended for temporary refuge only. The refugee problem is a trans-boundary one linked to the conflicting uses of international commons (Hakovirta, 1993, p. 35). A lack of a more comprehensive and holistic engagement amongst UN agencies in refugee issues has been the result of the widespread perception that refugees are UNHCR’s territory within the UN system (Loescher and Milner, 2011, p. 200; Slaughter and Crisp, 2009). Responsibility-sharing of refugees and the expansion of engagement with actors both within and outside the UN is necessary to effectively respond to refugee issues, especially protracted refugee situations (Slaughter and Crisp, 2009, p. 13). Furthermore, the evolution and direction of UNHCR’s work is controlled by a small number of traditional big donors. The international refugee regime has faced challenges in persuading states to meet their obligations towards refugees since the end of the initial phase of refugee flows in 1979-1980 when states demonstrated determination toward tackling global refugee challenges. Since then, Hakovirta describes the world’s response as “one of gradual resignation in the face of a cumulative problem to which there seems to be no solution. The insufficiency of the international response must be regarded as an increasingly significant cause of the refugee problem” (Hakovirta, 1993, p. 49). Hakovirta names this a crisis gap.
The crisis gap is closely related to burden sharing or lack thereof. The ‘burden’ of refugees is unequally distributed to the states of the global South as an “accident of geography.” As a result, there is a need for collaboration and cooperating among governments and agencies to address the global issue of refugees. Refugees should not be seen exclusively as UNHCR’s responsibility; however, UNHCR could have a crucial role to play in coordinating, facilitating, and advocating for the response of the UN system to respond to the increasing number of new challenges surrounding refugees (Loescher and Milner, 2011; Barnett, 2001).

There is an increasing need for the promotion of permanent solutions for refugees because of the massive number of new refugee problems that arose since the 1970s that pushed UNHCR to funnel the bulk of its resources to emergency aid and the maintenance of camps (Hakovirta, 1993; Slaughter and Crisp, 2009). UNHCR has had the tendency to focus efforts on distinct durable solutions at different periods of time; however, resettlement remains the most underutilized of the durable solutions. Resource constraints, training, and management challenges hamper UNHCR’s capacity to deliver on resettlement (Troeller, 2002) and only a limited number of countries cooperate with UNHCR in the area of refugee resettlement, representing the lack of burden sharing and cooperation among nations (Loescher and Milner, 2011). Resettlement provides the benefits of international protection, a permanent solution, and an expression of international solidarity and burden sharing. It also represents an important area of future innovation within the global governance of refugees because of the possibility to unlock other possible solutions for refugees in protracted situations (Loescher and Milner, 2011).
In order for the UNHCR to fulfill its mandate of achieving protection and solutions for refugees, it must engage proactively in these underutilized areas like resettlement to continue to shape the evolving protection regime.

**Resettlement Challenges**

The expansion of resettlement is increasingly being looked to as a durable solution to meet the needs of the growing number of refugees in protracted refugee situations. The number of participating resettlement countries has fruitfully increased from ten to twenty-two (“A New Beginning”, 2012), however, refugee flows are becoming increasingly diverse with refugees of certain nationalities the general public in resettlement countries are not familiar and with skills receiving countries do not value (“International Conference”, 2001, p. 2). Refugees face a growing number of barriers to successful integration which threaten the integrity of resettlement as truly a durable solution. In order for the international community to utilize resettlement as a form of strategic protection and a durable solution for refugees, more effort is required to ensure effective integration of refugees (“International Conference”, 2001; Working Group on Resettlement, 2003). Whether the small group of traditional donors will commit efforts to strengthen refugee self-sufficiency and promote integration to enhance the efficacy of protection depends on the ability of the international community to engage in burden sharing and cooperation (Helton, 2003; Working Group on Resettlement, 2003).

According to the International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees (ICRIRR), effective orientation and the ability to communicate with the
receiving community are essential principles and components of successful refugee integration ("International Conference", 2001, p. 22-23). A language acquisition program should be available to refugees to address the language needs of refugees until they have achieved a functional level of proficiency of the language ("International Conference", 2001, p. 22). However, receiving country priorities and other challenges in the receiving country prevent refugees from achieving a higher level of language proficiency to successfully integrate.

The United States refugee resettlement program emphasizes self-sufficiency through employment as spelled out in the Refugee Act of 1980 which states that “employable refugees should be placed on jobs as soon as possible after their arrival in the United States” (Halpern, 2008). However, this policy works counter to the needs of the increasingly diverse group of refugees the United States has admitted (Halpern, 2008; U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011; Ott, 2011; Columbia University, 2010). There is a broad consensus that the U.S. refugee resettlement assistance system is not adequately meeting the needs of the new arrivals and is in need of reform (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011; Columbia University, 2010; Ott, 2011). The U.S. system lacks a coherent and standardized framework for the integration of refugees that incorporates cultural adaptation; rather, employment is considered the primary indicator of refugee integration and self-sufficiency (Columbia University, 2010, p. 11). Consequently, according to the International Rescue Committee supported Columbia University report:
In this context, the job-first focus requires [resettlement agencies] to get employable refugees in a job as quickly as possible. As a result, refugees lack time to become acclimated to their new surroundings and consequently find themselves in jobs that are inappropriate for their skill set, and often do not have access to the supportive services that could improve their long-term outcome (Columbia University, 2010, p. 11).

To address this challenge, the establishment of a long-term and comprehensive orientation program while refugees accepted for resettlement to the U.S. await departure in the country of first asylum is recommended by some studies (Columbia University, 2010, p. 1; Dwyer, 2010). U.S. resettlement officials additionally identify pre-departure orientation in the country of first asylum as an area of much needed improvement (Columbia University, 2010, p.10). Pre-departure orientation is a vital part of the resettlement process to prepare refugees and to manage expectations of the receiving country; however, the resources and time invested in the orientation are inadequate. Individuals who have never been to the U.S. often provide the orientation and the volume and content of information provided is variable and often forgotten before arrival due to the narrow timeframe the information is provided (Columbia University, 2010, p. 10).

The Columbia University report (2010) recommends the expansion of pre-departure orientation as run by the overseas processing entity for refugees who have already been accepted for resettlement to the U.S. while they await departure (Columbia University, 2010, p. 16). Programmatically, the refugees should be given information on the communities they will be living in and the orientation should incorporate thorough cultural, linguistic, and vocational lessons (Columbia University, 2010, p. 16). The report also indicates that orientation should be longer to ensure better information retention and
to ensure improved foundational understanding of important information regardless of the context of their unique city of resettlement (Columbia University, 2010, p. 16).

In Halpern’s study of approaches used in the Office of Refugee Resettlement, refugees who had been in the U.S. for fewer than five years demonstrated decreasing employment and lower self-sufficiency rates compared to previous years (Halpern, 2008). These findings were speculated to be due to a greater number of refugees being admitted with lower education, inability to speak English, or illiteracy (Halpern, 2008). The Congressional Research Service’s report on U.S. Refugee Resettlement Assistance (2011) along with other studies identified English language as a key factor in achieving economic self-sufficiency (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011; Race and Masini, 1996; Potocky and McDonald, 1995; Majka and Mullan, 1992; and Vinokurov et al., 2000). The report also analyzed economic adjustment through the effects of education and English language ability on employment prospects of refugees. The data suggests that in comparison to the refugees that arrived in the early years of the U.S. refugee program, the more recent arrivals have had more education but less English language ability (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011). For example, fifty-eight percent of refugees surveyed were found to have no English ability from 2002-2007 in comparison to forty-two percent from 1990-1995 (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011). Prior studies consistently found English ability as one of the factors contributing to successful employment which may explain the decreasing employment and lower self-sufficiency rates in comparison to previous years (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011;
Halpern, 2008; Beiser, 2011; Beiser and Hou, 2001; Tollefson, 1985). The Obama administration also highlighted the needs of the refugees today in a budget request for the Office of Refugee Resettlement:

Changing demographics of the U.S. resettlement program present new challenges, as many populations require extended employment services to gain a toehold in the U.S. labor market and integrate into U.S. society. Many recent arrivals have spent protracted amounts of time in refugee camps in countries of first asylum, have experienced intense trauma and have disabilities. Many arriving refugees have limited work skills, cannot read and write in their own language and require intensive English as a Second Language (ESL) courses prior to employment (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011).

Despite the widespread recognition of the importance of English proficiency in achieving self-sufficiency, refugees face many difficulties in accessing English language training. There are not enough classes available for refugees, quality of instruction is poor, funding is insufficient for social services programs (which includes English language training), refugees cannot attend classes with their work schedule, and transportation systems are inadequate in some communities where refugees are resettled (Halpern, 2008; U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011).

Funding for the refugee assistance program decreased dramatically since the inception of the U.S. refugee program. In 1980, refugee cash assistance and medical assistance were available for up to thirty-six months; however, this assistance was curtailed to eight months since 1991. According to some observers, the longer time period the cash and medical assistance was available contributed to the long-term economic success of the Vietnamese refugees who arrived in large numbers in the 1980s (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011). Other recent reports concluded inadequate federal funding was provided for resettlement assistance to facilitate the long-

Weaknesses in coordination and linkages between agencies involved in the US refugee program exacerbates the likelihood that refugee needs will not be met. There are gaps in information sharing between federal and local agencies in the refugee placement decision-making process, between the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) in the Department of State and organizations that conduct overseas refugee processing and resettlement agencies in the Reception and Placement Program (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011). The Assistant Secretary of State for PRM Eric Schwartz also wrote during his site visits that weak linkages were apparent between the State Department’s initial Reception and Placement Program and the longer-term services provided by the Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011). The Congressional Research Services report indicates that some changes could be made within existing law, however, other require legislative action (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011).

The refugee resettlement policy of securing employment as quickly as possible does not adequately meet the needs of refugees. Integration needs to be conceived as a long-term process (Ott, 2011; “International Conference”, 2001; Columbia University,
A more proactive refugee policy with preventative approaches is necessary to ensure resettlement is truly a durable solution especially since the current refugee resettlement system strains local communities. Increased cooperation, coordination, and anticipatory planning at every stage of the resettlement process could strengthen the system’s ability to prepare refugees and receiving communities for resettlement (Columbia University, 2010, p. 8)

**Language Acquisition**

In much of the current literature on integration and language acquisition of resettled refugees, the focus has been on mental health and the impact of inadequate service provision on refugees being able to successfully learn the new language of their resettlement country. Target language acquisition has been articulated and proven as integral to the successful integration and resettlement of refugees (Hope, 2011; Tollefson, 1985; Altinkaya and Omundsen, 1999). Language acquisition has been identified as an important factor for refugees to be able to achieve a sense of belongingness and adaptation and overcome hardships (Keyes and Kane, 2004; Elmeroth, 2003). In Keyes and Kane’s (2004) study of resettled Bosnian refugees in the United States, the phenomenological method was used to study seven female adult Bosnian refugees that had been living in the United States for less than five years. Belonging and adaptation emerged as major themes central to a refugee’s experience in a new country. The study found the inability to speak the target language perfectly affected their feelings of belongingness and represented an obstacle to attaining the jobs they wanted (Keyes and
Kane, 2004, p. 820). Attaining perfect language ability was important to the Bosnian refugees for not feeling different or inferior as well as for restoring normalcy to their lives because they saw language as a way to connect and understand the natives on a deeper level (Keyes and Kane, 2004, p. 820).

Target language proficiency also has an important psychological impact for refugees in redressing issues of exclusion, alienation and depression (Beiser and Hou, 2001; Beiser, 2006). Proficiency facilitates social contact, autonomy, and increases individual coping strategies which in turn safeguards mental health (Beiser and Hou, 2001; Beiser, 2006). Beiser (2006) identified the ability to speak the host country language as an adaptive advantage because it increases employability and safeguards against isolation and depression (Beiser, 2006, p. 62). Beiser and Hou conducted a longitudinal study from 1979 to 1981 in Canada, focusing on the effects of unemployment and language proficiency on the mental health of Southeast Asians resettled in Canada. Although the study’s main concern is on mental health effects, it draws important correlations between language proficiency and employment using a covariance structural equation model, useful for this study. Language proficiency was found to be associated with increased probability of employment (Beiser and Hou, 2001; Tollefson, 1985). Potocky and McDonald (1995) similarly found English-speaking ability to be associated with better economic status; households lacking language proficiency were found to have over $8,000 less in household income than households with language proficiency (Potocky and McDonald, 1995). However, education was not found to be an important determinant of employability, perhaps because refugees tend to work unskilled
and menial jobs where education is not a requisite (Beiser and Hou, 2001; U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011; Race and Masini, 1996; Potocky and McDonald, 1995; Majka and Mullan, 1992; and Vinokurov et al., 2000). Prior English language proficiency was also found as an important predictor of eventual English language ability (Beiser and Hou, 2001; Tollefson, 1985). Lack of language proficiency compromises access to services as well as limits participation in civic life. The poorly educated, women, and the elderly were found least likely to learn English, indicating their increased risk of isolation and susceptibility to adverse mental health effects (Beiser and Hou, 2001). However, the loss of about half of the original sample throughout the course of the longitudinal study may have affected the results of Beiser and Hou’s (2001) study.

New Zealand resettles on average 950 to 1,350 refugees per annum. From 1980 to 2002, it resettled 16,556 refugees under the Refugee Quota Programme (Gray and Elliot, 2001). New Zealand’s Department of Labor conducted a research project to delve into the resettlement experiences of refugees in New Zealand in order to improve support systems and policy development for the refugees, which could be applied to the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Approximately 398 refugees were interviewed. Using both open-ended and closed-ended paper based questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, the study identified reasons for refugees wanting to learn English, effective methods of improving English, and problems accessing English language training which could apply to other resettled refugees in other receiving countries, such as the U.S. Refugees were motivated to learn English for reasons including: to find a job, to survive, to deal with everyday events, to further their study or training, and to communicate (Gray and Elliot, 2001).
About one-quarter of the resettled refugees in New Zealand reported learning English at an educational institution like a school, university, or polytechnic to be most effective (Gray and Elliot, 2001). Effective methods for improving their English included daily contact with English language speakers, including the media.

Lack of affordable child care, expensive classes, transportation constraints, and lack of information on how to access classes prevent refugees from attending language classes (Gray and Elliot, 2001; Tollefson, 1985; Altinkaya and Omundsen, 1999). In the United States, the refugee resettlement program prioritizes achieving economic self-sufficiency and then accessing language training programs concurrently either through training provided at the workplace, if available, or outside of working hours through community based programs (Fostering Independent Communication, 2002). The belief in this model is that refugees will learn the language through day-to-day interactions and employment, however, the time and skills required for refugees to become proficient in English may be underestimated (Altinkaya and Omundsen; 1999). This is especially the case for older refugees; factors such as chronic disease, physical mobility, hearing loss and vision problems, and different developmental differences in brain pre- and post-puberty affect the language learning ability of adults (Grognet, 1997).

Besides the inherent and increased difficulties for adults to learn a new language, the user-pays environment in which English is offered in resettlement countries like the U.S. and New Zealand magnifies the obstacles to accessing classes (White et al., 2001). White et al. explored this connection in their study of English language provision in New Zealand. Questionnaires filled out by 248 immigrant and refugee learners of English
identified the two main problems they faced in learning English in New Zealand: the high cost of English classes and the lack of opportunities to converse with native speakers (White et al., 2001). Factors including the need to look after family members, lack of money, and a preoccupation with settling into their new home and looking for employment were found as reasons for not enrolling in English language classes (White et al., 2001). However, eliminating fees for English classes and provisioning services like childcare to refugees may facilitate faster language acquisition and self-sufficiency.

Conversation with English language speakers (in daily activities, through friends and family, and through the media) was cited as a main reason for improvement in English (Gray and Elliot, 2001), but exposure to these opportunities are limited. Other reasons for improvement in English included attending English language courses, learning at school, learning at the workplace, tertiary institutions, personal effort, and self-study (Gray and Elliot, 2001). Although practicing English with native speakers leads to greatest improvement, opportunities to do so are limited. The majority (27.4 percent) of resettled refugees reported having “some” opportunities of using English during their first year in New Zealand while 23.0 percent reported having “few” opportunities, 27.0 percent “very few”, “16.5 percent “a lot”, and 6.0 percent “no opportunities” (White et al., 2001).

Similarly, Elmeroth (2003) found resettled Bosnian refugees in Sweden to be living in relative isolation or in what he termed ‘solitary confinement’ because of their complete lack of contact with Swedes. Only two of the students went to the home of a native Swede and the rest of the study participants’ only contact with the native population was with the teacher (Elmeroth, 2003). Refugees reported difficulties in making contact with
native Swedes and even cited being met with suspicion from their neighbors (Elmeroth, 2003). A refugee shared his experience with resettlement at the International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees:

Most of those who come to Sweden today only have contact with public bodies and public officials. Many say they have never had a conversation with a private Swedish citizen although they have been living here for five or six years or more. In our country today, thousands of people from non-Swedish ethnic backgrounds are living in a state of permanent exclusions - outside the labour market, outside Swedish cultural and social life, outside housing areas where Swedes live. (“International Conference”, 2001, p. 16)

Refugees face difficulties learning the target language because of the pressure to find employment simultaneously, particularly in the U.S. and New Zealand. Employment does not lead to increased language proficiency nor does spending time in the United States lead to increased language proficiency (Tollefson, 1985). However, Beiser and Hou’s (2001) study conflicts with the latter clause. They found mastery of the receiving country’s language increases with the duration of residence (Beiser and Hou, 2001). This contradiction may have to do with differences in participants’ levels of English proficiency at initial measurement. If resettled refugees were measured to have intermediate level of English initially, they are more likely to have improved their language skills than a resettled refugee who was measured to have little or no proficiency in English at initial measurement because of a steep learning curve involved in language learning. Potocky and McDonald (1995) also found length of residence to contribute minimally to attaining employment. This finding is striking in relation to Potocky and McDonald’s additional finding that English proficiency increased the odds of being employed (McDonald and Potocky, 1995) because it suggests length of residence to have minimal effects on language ability.
Changing societal and familial roles complicate language learning in a new country especially for adults (Lovell et al., 1987). Adult resettled refugees are at a point in their lives where they earned a position of status and reverence in their home villages, but find themselves in a new country where they feel devalued and out of place. Elmeroth (2003) studied resettled Bosnian refugees in Sweden who reported feeling humiliated and embarrassed in situations where their children took on the role as interpreter. This shift in authority occurs when parents become dependent on their children (Elmeroth, 2003). Furthermore, feelings of devaluation make many men perceive a loss of control over their family (Lovell et al., 1987). These changing familial roles may be consequential for an adult’s language learning experience because the adults tend to become reliant on their children and may lose motivation to learn the new language.

Resettlement is only truly a durable solution if refugees are able to successfully integrate (“Progress report on resettlement”, 2012). Having proficiency in the target language is one of the first steps toward achieving integration, however, refugees can feel marginalized in their new countries, leading to social isolation and lack of language learning opportunities with native speakers (Elmeroth, 2003). A multitude of internal and external factors affect language acquisition in the receiving country. Many refugees are illiterate and have never gone to school, making it more difficult to learn a new language (Tollefson, 1985). Those that have some experience with learning some English prior to their time of entrance to the receiving country are at an advantage because it is an important predictor of eventual attainment (Tollefson, 1985). Even English language programs in refugee processing centers have had a “pronounced” effect on the English
proficiency of most refugees by the time of arrival to the United States, indicating the importance of early exposure of English to refugees (Tollefson, 1985). Contrary to the United States rationale behind its approach to refugee integration, most refugees do not “pick up” English on the job (except for children) (Tollefson, 1985), indicating the need to make changes to the approach taken towards integration to ensure resettlement truly becomes a durable solution for refugees.

**Global Public Policy Networks**

In the late twentieth century, globalization began to transform geographic conditions, temporal conditions, complexity of public policy issues, and accountability and legitimacy of response (Benner et al., 2012). States and international organizations were no longer the only players in the international realm; the proliferation of non-governmental organizations and businesses put them on the same playing field (Benner et al., 2012; Gordenker and Weiss, 1995). Additionally, institutions, governments, non-governmental organizations, agencies, and international treaties alone have proven insufficient to effectively meet global challenges using traditional methods. The growing complexity of global issues in an increasingly globalized and interdependent world calls for a more innovative institutional and operational response to deliver results inclusively and transparently (Streck, 2002, p. 2). New governance problems require governance from multiple levels with the coordination of multiple sectors (Reinicke et al., 2000, p. 70; Streck, 2002, p. 3). The idea of global public policy networks is relevant for this study because of the need for a non-traditional solution to effectively address
international problems such as the global challenge of ensuring resettlement is a durable solution through preparatory language training. The following three characteristics of global public policy networks particularly pertain to this study and how networks may be useful for addressing this challenge: they are tri-sectoral in nature which allows networks to more effectively and efficiently address global governance challenges; they require an international body to convene states, businesses, and civil society to address critical global challenges which leaves room for the UN to play a bigger role; and they have the ability to successfully set the agenda and negotiate global standards.

Networks are tri-sectoral in character which permits stakeholders from various sectors to bring their complementary resources to the process to allow for synergies. Involving both public and private sectors, global public policy networks enable states and international organizations to better meet their responsibilities in an evolving environment by managing relationships “that might otherwise degenerate into counterproductive confrontation” (Witte et al., 2000, p. 178; Reinicke and Deng, 2000).

As Witte et al. describe, a network:

combines the voluntary energy and legitimacy of the civil society sector with the financial muscle and interest of businesses and the enforcement and rule-making power and coordination and capacity-building skills of states and international organizations (Witte et al., 2000, p. 179).

In an increasingly complex global environment where resources are limited and coordination is necessary to respond to public policy issues, networks are structured to exploit the unique resources each participating sector brings to the table (Witte et al., 2000, p. 179). For example, collaboration with the private sector and non-governmental organizations in networks enhances learning processes which have been notoriously slow
in public institutions (Witte et al., 2000, p. 185-186). Networks generate predictability and fruitful cooperation among stakeholders to effectively address the challenges of the world (Witte et al., 2000, p. 179; Streck, 2002, p. 7). Networks also benefit from being issue-based and have the ability to address issues that no one group can resolve by itself because of its tri-sectoral nature (Witte et al., 2000, p. 178).

There is a special place for international organizations, such as the UN, in global public policy networks because of their ability to mediate on a global level between states, business, and civil society actors (Witte et al., 2000). Reinicke et al. calls upon and makes recommendations to the UN to develop an approach to collaborating with governments, business, and civil society in global public policy networks. The UN is constrained by limited political, human, and financial resources to respond to global problems (Reinicke et al., 2000, p. 80). Tri-sectoral networks provide a mechanism for the UN to leverage scarce resource to respond effectively to increasingly complex issues (Reinicke et al., 2000). The UN can play an intermediary role between states, business, and civil society because of its demonstrated comparative advantage in convening cross-sectoral meetings on global issues (Reinicke et al., 2000). The UN has begun to strategize approaches to address global challenges using the idea of global public policy networks as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan explicitly stated in his 1999 address and some bodies within the UN system are already involved in ongoing global public policy initiatives. For example, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has acted primarily as a norm entrepreneur through its advocacy coalition with interested
states and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to create the International Criminal Court (Reinicke et al., 2000, p. 85).

Networks also take on the function of agenda setting and norm setting, which is useful for potentially setting global standards. The UN has played various roles in global public policy networks including acting as a norm entrepreneur. For example, United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) used its global network to promote children right’s issues through the media and successfully raised awareness and action against the use of child soldiers. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) similarly reshaped discourse and development through the formulation of the annual Human Development Report (HDR). The HDR, as a result, has placed people and their well-being at the center of measuring development instead of income. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is another example of a global public policy network successfully placing a new issue on the global agenda. The Landmines campaign succeeded in raising awareness of the problem and moving toward its resolution because of its focused media campaign waged by a coalition of NGOs in partnership with the governments of several medium-sized nations. As a result, the 1997 Ottawa Convention was signed relatively quickly because the landmines advocacy network effectively pressured governments to act more quickly.
My Contribution to the Literature

Prior studies point to English as an underlying problem to resettlement because it predicts economic status, employment, psychological adaptation, access to services, and integration success. The bulk of the literature focuses on the problems of resettlement, challenges refugees face in achieving integration, and the importance of target language acquisition for resettlement and integration; these studies focus on identifying the problems refugees face in the country of resettlement to improve policy and practice. However, there are few studies exploring how to improve resettlement through preventative and preparatory approaches in the country of first asylum, focusing on the underlying factor to successful integration, target language acquisition. This study represents an initial attempt to fill these gaps in knowledge. My study jumps off the findings of these prior studies to explore the possibilities of implementing a language training program in the refugee camps as a preventative approach in facilitating long-term resettlement success. It focuses on how to prepare refugees for resettlement in the country of first asylum by interviewing both camp refugees that have applied for resettlement and refugees that have already been resettled in order to gain insight and draw comparisons between both groups of refugees. My study also concentrates on language training by exploring the need for English language training in the camps, interest in English classes in the camps before resettlement, possible barriers to accessing classes, and perceptions on requiring English classes versus making classes optional for refugees who opt for resettlement. The perspective of service providers was also gained to form a more holistic picture of assessing the possibilities of implementing English classes in the camps to
better prepare refugees for resettlement. Finally, this study attempts to contribute to the knowledge of the global refugee regime, which is constantly evolving, by construing target language training in the camps as a necessary norm for making resettlement a truly durable solution.
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Although the study is not an ethnographic study per se, it is ethnographically informed. Four groups of participants were interviewed to gather a diversity of perspectives and assure sufficient comprehension of the resettlement process and English language training in the camps. These groups include: refugees (both living in the camps in Thailand and resettled refugees in Colorado); representatives of non-governmental organizations along the Thai-Burma border; representatives of international organizations based in Thailand; and government officials based in Thailand. My colleague\(^1\) and I spent a total of seven weeks along the Thai-Burma border conducting interviews and surveys with the four target population groups. The first two to three weeks of our time was spent developing relationships and making contacts with key informants and gatekeepers to facilitate our access to the target population groups. A total of twelve inconsecutive days were spent interviewing and surveying the refugee population in Mae La refugee camp, Umphiem refugee camp, and Poh Prah Township. The remaining time was spent interviewing organizational representatives in Mae Sot and Bangkok.

My colleague and I employed the mixed methods approach for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 285). Mixed methods

\(^1\) My colleague, Erin Kesler, and I conducted all surveys, interviews, and focus groups together. Erin Kesler’s analysis of the findings resulted in a separate but complementary thesis topic to this study.
research, also described as methodological eclecticism, strives for a balance and compromise between two methods and it is valued for its diversity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.285). By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, mixed methods research cancels out the weaknesses of both respective methods to answer the research question (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 285). It also triangulates the data through closed and open-ended questions to minimize bias such as an interpretation error or the subject misinterpreting an open-ended question. Likewise, Greene et al. (1989) encouraged the mixing of methods for the purpose of triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 293). In this study, a combination of semi-structured interviews, surveys, and focus groups were employed to sufficiently reach my research objectives. It balanced open-ended interview and survey questions for qualitative methods and closed-ended survey questions for quantitative methods. This mixed methods approach sufficiently captures the complexity of the problem while simultaneously triangulating data and findings.

In order to explore the possibilities of implementing a formalized language training program in refugee camps to potentially improve the resettlement process, the interview questions were designed to explore interest, need, barriers, and perceptions. More specifically, the survey and interview questions for the refugees in the camps and resettled refugees touched on need, demand, challenges, and perceptions of instituting English language classes in the camps as a way to improve the long-term success of resettlement. The interview questions for the organization and government representatives were designed to explore interest and the barriers to implementing
English classes in the camps to determine feasibility. The questions touched on their priorities, barriers and challenges to service provision, key needs, approach to addressing refugee livelihoods, perception on English language training in the camps, and insight on improving the resettlement process.

A total of sixteen interviews, thirty-eight surveys, and three focus group sessions were conducted and analyzed using applied thematic analysis and cross tabulation analysis. The succeeding sub-sections provide rationales for choosing this specific case study as well as for utilizing semi-structured interviews, surveys, and focus groups. Following, the techniques for participant sampling, study procedures, ethical issues, data analysis, and benefits and limitations of the chosen methodology are explicated.

Case study

A case study is used to facilitate understanding of the problem this study addresses as well as to provide insight into the complex issues of effective resettlement and global governance of the refugee regime. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the results of a case study may be generalized to a degree to other protracted refugee situations. This particular unique protracted refugee case was chosen because atypical cases offer the greatest opportunity to learn from than typical cases (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The refugees have been living on the Thai-Burma border for twenty-seven years in a state of limbo and uncertainty which has led to donor fatigue and the phasing out of programs. Of the three durable solutions offered to the refugees from Burma, resettlement is the most viable. Thailand is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention of 1957,
inhibiting local integration into the Thai communities and the refugees fear returning to their homeland because of the continual instability and mistreatment they fear by their government. In addition, the experience of acquiring English for those refugees who have resettled to the United States is one of the most difficult because many of the refugees are illiterate adults, have little to no formal education, and have had little exposure to the Western world.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with key informant refugees, representatives of non-governmental organizations, representatives of international organizations, and government officials. Interviews with refugees were conducted in a semi-private setting of their homes, and interviews with representatives and government officials were conducted in the participant's office, restaurant, or café. Semi-structured interviews function more informally as an interactional exchange of dialogue like a discussion or conversation. The interviews were conducted with a fairly open framework using the interview guide approach. The interview guide approach follows an interview protocol with pre-specified topics and questions which can be reworded as needed and covered in any sequence or order (Johnson and Turner, 2003, p. 305-306). Certain questions may be omitted based on what the interviewer deems as appropriate to each subject and additional questions can be developed during the interview to probe for details or to discuss certain issues further (Johnson and Turner, 2003, p. 305). In this study, the interviews began with more general questions and then
moved into more specific questions relevant to the study. Semi-structured interviews were most appropriate for this study because of the attitudinal and exploratory nature of the majority of the interview questions. The ability to discuss and ask participants to explain or clarify their viewpoints on English training programs in the camps enhanced the findings of the study. Standardization was not a priority for the study, which explains the benefit of utilizing semi-structured interviews over questionnaires, which offer less flexibility for clarification and probing.

**Surveys**

Structured surveys were conducted for refugees in the camps and those resettled in Colorado. The structured surveys were conducted face-to-face in the homes of the refugees and included both closed and open-ended questions. The surveys were administered face-to-face to maximize response rates and to clarify potentially confusing questions. Cross-sectional surveys collect standardized data to make inferences about a specific population at one point in time and the data is analyzable (Jupp, 2006). For example, possible associations between variables such as English proficiency levels and refugee enrollment in English classes could be explored quantitatively to improve service provision. Conducting surveys is also appropriate for qualitative analysis because the attitudes of a greater proportion of the population of interest may be surveyed through open-ended questions within the time constraint. The use of closed-ended questions in the survey minimized possibilities of confusion and triangulated the responses of similar open-ended questions that could have been potentially confusing for the refugees or
mistranslated by the interpreter. Closed-ended questions are straight-forward and were used to ensure findings accurately reflected the views and opinions of the respondents. Initial surveys conducted demonstrated the difficulty some refugees experienced in answering and comprehending particular open-ended questions perhaps because of their low levels of education. Furthermore, certain closed-ended survey questions used a four point Likert scale. My colleague and I chose to use a four point Likert scale to minimize confusion among participants; pilot test surveys indicated that the refugees had difficulties differentiating between similar categories, indicating that it was optimal to use fewer, but more distinct answer choices. A downfall for administering surveys face-to-face is that respondents may give socially desirable responses; this factor was taken into account by following up closed-ended opinion questions with other open-ended questions that asked respondents to expand upon their attitudes.

Focus Groups

Three focus group sessions were conducted to complement the other two methods of data collection: surveys and semi-structured interviews. Two of the focus groups were small groups of four and the third, a group of three. Initially, my colleague and I planned to conduct one focus group with eight participants and another focus group with three participants, however, the stark differences in the participant’s English proficiency levels and experiences prompted us to split the subjects into groups based on their English proficiency levels to ensure they felt more comfortable. The focus group sessions were conducted in a semi-private classroom in the refugee camp. My colleague and I chose to
conduct focus groups because of the associated advantages they have for vulnerable populations or people with language or communication difficulties, such as the population of this study. Group interviews tend to facilitate a more natural and productive environment (Hall and Hall, 2004) and allow individual opinions and attitudes to be expressed in a non-threatening situation against the opinions of others around a specific topic. In these settings, individuals may challenge each other’s views which may result in the researcher ending up with more realistic accounts of people’s beliefs (Hall and Hall, 2004). Focus groups also allow for probing and are useful for exploring ideas; however, a weakness of focus groups is the tendency for one to two participants to dominate the conversation (Johnson and Turner, 2003, p. 310). We mitigated this issue by encouraging other participants to voice their opinions.

Participant Sampling

The nonprobability sampling approach was used in this research to hone in on a specific population of interest. There are two different broad types of nonprobability sampling: accidental and purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used in this study to seek information from specific predefined groups. This type of sampling is useful when there is a time constraint and sampling for proportionality is not a concern. More specifically, participants were recruited using the snowball sampling technique, a subgroup of purposive sampling. Snowball sampling is useful for reaching populations that are inaccessible or hard to contact (Hall and Hall, 2004) such as this study’s population. It involves beginning with a few individuals of the target group who are
accessible to the researcher and then relying on referral to other individuals of the target
group of interest (Hall and Hall, 2004). This method involves a level of bias and does not
lead to a representative sample; however, as this is an exploratory study with a time
constraint, it served as the best method for achieving the research goals.

My colleague and I detailed a description of the four target populations of interest
(refugees, non-governmental organization representatives, representatives of international
organizations, and government officials) before identifying and recruiting participants.
The refugee study population was defined as ethnic minorities from Burma living in the
refugee camps between the ages of 18 to 50 years old. Representatives of non-
governmental organizations were recruited based on having at least three years of
experience with English language training programs in the refugee camps and between
the ages of 30 to 60 years old. Government officials and representatives of international
organizations were recruited based on having at least five years of experience and
between the ages of 30 to 60 years old. The snowball technique does not allow the
researcher complete control of the identification of and access to participants, which
inevitably resulted in some differences between the target population and the study
population. The snowball technique was used for all four target groups, but mainly for the
refugee group.

The majority of government officials and representatives of non-governmental
and international organizations were identified beforehand through previous contacts
such as friends and professors. Potential refugee participants were identified through a
gatekeeper and a culture broker. A gatekeeper controls research access (Punch, 1994, p.
in the case of this study, the gatekeeper controlled access to the refugee camps and the refugee target study group. After ascertaining our research would not exploit the refugees, the gatekeeper assisted with our access to the refugee camps and identified key initial refugee informants, enabling us to use the snowball sampling technique to identify additional potential participants. Additionally, the gatekeeper connected us with an interpreter who lived in the refugee camp, attended a post-10 school, and was familiar with the English programs and service providers in the camp. The interpreter also served as our culture broker during the interviews and surveys. A culture broker is “a person who knows a great deal about a society, its history, and the ways that sociocultural information might need to be interpreted by outsiders” (Van Arsdale, 2012). Our culture broker taught us greetings in the Karen language, the main language of the refugees interviewed, as well as other cultural norms, such as how to eat the ‘Karen way’, to show respect. The culture broker’s large number of connections in the refugee camp also facilitated our access to the study’s target population.

The eligibility criteria for all groups participating in the research required participants to be at least 18 years old. As this is an exploratory study with a time constraint, the sample size was smaller than initially expected, however, the sample size still allowed the research objectives to be met. A total of twenty-nine refugees along the Thai-Burma border; fifteen resettled refugees in Colorado; three representatives of international organizations; six representatives of non-governmental organizations; and one government official were interviewed.
Study Procedures

Surveys were conducted and interviews were arranged in a variety of ways: the interpreter pre-arranged times and places to meet; my colleague and I walked around the refugee camp with the interpreter to the homes of refugees the interpreter knew and thought would be suitable for our target population; my colleague and I identified suitable participants such as at vocational shops run by non-governmental organizations; and my colleague and I asked camp leaders to recommend potential suitable participants. Once we determined the refugee to meet the eligibility requirements and description of the target population as much as possible, general information regarding the study and consent form was explained. We asked the participants if they had any questions and if they consented to the interview being audio-recorded. After the consent was signed, the audio recording device was turned on for interviews, if given consent, and the interview began (surveys were not audio-recorded). Interviews followed the interview guide’s structure and questions, and the survey strictly followed the structured pre-set questions. Both the interview and survey followed the same structure to ensure standard procedures across interviews: greeting; introduction; general information about the study; explanation of the consent form; demographical questions; general informational questions; behavioral questions; attitudinal questions; and a closing statement. I took notes in a notebook during interviews and on the margins of the survey during individual surveys. Survey and interview lengths ranged from thirty minutes for surveys up to ninety minutes for interviews. No incentives were given to participants to avoid causing any
potential conflict or controversy in the refugee camp; however, a modest monetary incentive was given to the interpreter upon the advice of the gatekeeper.

Potential participants from non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and the government were contacted through email to arrange for a time and place to meet. At the start of the interview, introductions were exchanged and then general information regarding the objectives and purpose of the study were explained. A consent form detailing contact information, the nature of the study, and the questions to be asked during the interview was explained to the participant and signed by the interviewee prior to the start of the interview and audio recording, if participants consented. After the written consent was signed, the interview began; the interview followed the printed copy of questions with some variation in wording and question order. The interview was structured as follows: general information about the participant’s role in the organization; informational questions about the organization; priorities; barriers and challenges; lessons learned; attitudinal questions; and a concluding statement. Interview length ranged from thirty minutes to ninety minutes.

**Ethical Issues**

Possible ethical issues of this study included ensuring the confidentiality of the data. My colleague and I underwent the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process through the University of Denver before the research process began to ensure that our study did not violate any ethical issues. We adhered to the following ethical guidelines,
including the three Belmont principles, to ensure the protection of research subjects throughout the duration of the study:

- Ensure protection of the dignity and well-being of research subjects
- Research data must remain confidential throughout the study
- The research subject’s autonomy must be respected
- Non-maleficence - do not inflict evil or harm on others and minimize inadvertent harms
- Beneficence – minimize any possible risks to participants using procedures consistent with sound research design; do not unnecessarily expose participants to risk; maintain confidentiality of data through adequate provisions
- Justice – select participants in an equitable manner
- Respect for persons – seek informed consent from each prospective research subject in accordance with IRB regulations; take adequate provisions to protect subject’s privacy

The informed consent process was used to gain the permission of conducting research on each prospective research subject. My colleague and I provided specific information about the purpose of the study and the types of questions that would be asked. This process allowed the subjects ample time to ask questions, ask for
clarification, and decide whether they wanted to participate in the study or not. Before the interview began, my colleague and I also assured each subject that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time or decline to answer any specific questions. Additionally, subjects were assured that the results would be anonymous and confidential, and clarified that no guarantees could be made regarding the outcomes of the study in order to minimize false expectations. The consent form allowed the subjects to write down their contact information to opt for the final results of the study to be sent to them by mail or email. The consent forms were translated into the subjects’ primary language to ensure they understood their rights and specific study procedures; the forms also had our contact information. A confidentiality form was also explained and signed by the interpreter.

A gatekeeper and culture broker navigated the language and cultural barriers of the refugee population throughout our interview and survey process. The use of a gatekeeper and culture broker was helpful for learning basic cultural norms and gaining the trust of the refugee population and prospective subjects before participating in our study. The interviews were conducted in the subject’s primary language through the use of a trusted interpreter to ensure that the subjects felt comfortable. My colleague and I were also careful in wording our questions, especially the more difficult and open-ended questions, to minimize any harm to subjects which may be caused by frustration or embarrassment in not being able to answer a question. Interviews were conducted in semi-private settings to ensure the privacy of the subjects as much as possible and to mitigate any possible risks of the subjects partaking in the research.
Precautions were taken to minimize risk with data storage. Codes were used as identifiers and any direct identifiers were removed immediately. The data were inputted into password protected computers which were kept in a lock box secured in our locked bags in our private double-locked room in Thailand. In the U.S., data is kept in a hidden lock box. Only the principal investigators have access to the data. Finally, my colleague and I took precautions to be objective throughout the interviews to prevent our personal biases and opinions from getting in the way of our research and to ensure all subjects received fair consideration.

**Data Analysis**

A mixed methods approach to data analysis was used to analyze interviews and survey findings in an integrative manner. Mixed methods data analysis, according to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) are “the processes whereby QUAN and QUAL data analysis strategies are combined, connected, or integrated in research studies” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 294). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods enhances the rigor of the study because it provides substantiated results without neglecting important contextual factors. Thematic analysis was used for interviews and the open-ended survey questions, while cross-tabulation analysis was used for the closed-ended survey questions.

Data was analyzed thematically to examine commonalities, differences, and relationships. The steps involved in this approach included: 1) organizing and preparing the data for analysis; 2) reading through the data; 3) coding the data with the help of the
qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 10, to synthesize themes and relationships; and 5) interpreting the meaning of codes and themes to capture the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). Coding was conducted using the two types of codes: apriori codes and empirical codes. Apriori codes are defined prior to examining the data and form a skeleton outline for preliminary categorization whereas empirical codes are created through the examination of the data (Gibson and Brown, 2009, p. 130). For example, the apriori codes for the refugee target group of the study included:

- Demographic
- Current English proficiency level
- Motivations for resettlement
- Experience with English programs in the camps
- Expectations about the third country
- Barriers and challenges to accessing English programs in the camps
- Perception of English classes in the camps

Empirical codes emerged through exploring the data both through a derivative of an apriori category and an entirely new category. Some empirical codes of the study included: communication, coordination, no time, attitude, positive perception of English classes, and negative perception of English classes. Following the completion of coding, relationships between codes were analyzed as well as how certain individual characteristics or differences related to themes and codes (Gibson and Brown, 2009, p. 129).

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a predictive analytics software, aided in the analysis of quantitative data. Quantitative analysis was used to measure
factors that affect English proficiency level to determine whether or not English classes implemented at the camp level will benefit refugees that opt for resettlement. Cross tabulation tables were used to analyze discrete variable in this study. The chi-square test, a common test of statistical significance in the social sciences, was used to describe the relation of and to test the association between two categorical variables; however, the test does not imply the strength of the association. The p-value indicates the strength of association; the smaller the p-value, the stronger the evidence of association (Agresti and Finlay, 2009, p. 233). The chi-square test was also used to determine whether the two categorical variables being analyzed were statistically independent, which is why it is also called the chi-square test of independence. Hypothesis tests were used to test the significance of variables; $H_0$ (null hypothesis) indicates that the variables are statistically independent (i.e., not related) and $H_1$ (alternative hypothesis) indicates that the variables are statistically dependent (i.e., related). If the chi-square test indicates significance, $H_0$ is rejected, indicating that the variables are related. The larger the chi-square statistic, the smaller the p-value, and the stronger the evidence of association (Agresti and Finlay, 2009, p. 233).

The variables analyzed using the chi-square tests in this study included:

- Age
- Highest level of education attained
- English proficiency level
- Attendance to English class in refugee camp
- Attendance to English class in U.S.
- Number of years living in the U.S.
The confidence interval is used to estimate the strength of the association in the population (Agresti and Finlay, 2009, p. 233) and speaks to the accuracy of the estimation (Agresti and Finlay, 2009, p. 110). It is an interval of numbers within which the parameter is believed to fall (Agresti and Finlay, 2009, p. 110). Complementing thematic analysis with cross tabulation analysis gave rigor to the findings of this study.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

General Findings for Refugees in Thailand

My colleague and I surveyed twenty-three refugees and interviewed six refugees along the Thai-Burma border from Mae La refugee camp, Umphiem refugee camp, and Poh Phra Township. The findings from the surveys will be discussed throughout this entire section whereas the findings from the interviews will be interwoven in the ‘Interest and Demand for English’ and ‘Availability to Attend English Classes’ sub-sections. The bulk of the refugee participants fell in the 18-24 years and 41-50 years old age group as demonstrated in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number Surveyed</th>
<th>Number Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Number of refugee participants by age group

Twelve of the twenty-three refugees surveyed applied for resettlement. Of the refugees that have applied for resettlement, eight reported no fears about resettlement because they are “bored and have stayed in the camp for too long.” Of the refugees who reported having some fears about resettlement, four feared being able to learn English;
two feared finding employment; and one feared separation from family. In addition, one refugee reported concern about their children; two stated that their welfare depended on the resettlement agency; and one reported having fears about their lack of education.

Importance of English

Awareness about the importance of learning English for resettlement and of existing English classes in the refugee camps was measured. Eight of the nine refugees that are in communication with family members already resettled to the third country believe it is important to learn English longer before resettlement. Six refugees stated that their resettled family members gave them advice and of these six refugees, five were advised to learn English before resettlement. Eight out of nine refugees believe it is important to learn English for a longer time before resettlement and one said it was not important.

English programs offered in camp

English programs in the camp are offered through post-10 schools and non-governmental organizations such as World Education (WE) and ZOA Refugee Care (ZOA) or through a private tutor. The programs through the post-10 schools and WE target a younger age group (typically 18-24 years old) and charge a fee, which bar refugees from accessing them. These programs also cater to refugees that plan to repatriate. ZOA’s non-formal education (NFE) program remains the only program targeting adult refugees of any age for resettlement; however, few of the participants
were over thirty years old. ZOA’s program is phasing out in 2013 which demonstrates the need for a standardized language program targeting refugees for resettlement in the camps.

Awareness of English programs in camps

The survey results indicated that three of twenty-three of the camp refugees are aware of ZOA’s NFE program. Regarding awareness of any existing English classes in the refugee camps, seven of twenty-three refugees do not know English is offered in the camps. Twelve refugees know of English programs in general in the camps and eight of them could name at least one school or organization offering an English program.

Interest and Demand for English Lessons in Camps

All of the refugees surveyed reported that they want to learn English for the reasons delineated in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you want to learn English?</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Language</td>
<td>12/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Because in Burma, I never learned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Because if you can speak, no one can look down on you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To communicate (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Necessity for connecting and communicating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is a part of the world and is very important.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Because I want to teach my Karen people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Reasons why refugees want to learn English
Similarly, the refugees that were interviewed related the importance of learning English to being an international language. With English, the refugees explained that “we can go everywhere around the world. And then we go to the work, we can find work very easy.”

Of the twelve refugees that want to resettle, eleven refugees said English is important to learn before resettlement and one refugee said it was not important because she is illiterate and will rely on her son to take care of her. Table 4 demonstrates the reasons why the refugees think English is important to learn before resettlement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you think English is important to learn before resettlement?</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For education and job opportunities</td>
<td>5/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For integration</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because it is a universal language</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Because it is not our country and English is the mother language; need it to communicate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To communicate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Reasons Why English is important to learn before resettlement

To measure interest, behavior, and perception of English classes in the camps, the following three questions were asked:

• Would you go to English classes if they were OPTIONAL and offered at a time you had free time?

• Do you think it is a good idea to offer English classes in the camp before resettlement? Why or why not?

• Do you think it is a good idea for refugees who are resettling to be REQUIRED to learn English? Why or why not?

Table 5 delineates the answers to these three questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Why or why not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you go to English classes if they were optional and offered at a time you had free time?</td>
<td>22/23</td>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think it is a good idea to offer English classes in the camp before resettlement? Why or why not?</td>
<td>22/23</td>
<td>0/23</td>
<td>- Communication, information, less difficulty. (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Need it to get around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Find jobs, et cetera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Everything will be easier for us if we know English and we will face fewer problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Yes because it is good for our children and their future (but I personally don’t really want to go).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Universal language; to communicate. (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- It is good but I don’t know why because I’ve never been to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- To understand English, communicate, get job easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Easier to integrate and communicate when resettle to third country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Because us students need to learn more English. (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Because it will better our lives. It will be easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- If they want to go to third country, they should speak English. It is good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- I don’t know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think it is a good idea for refugees who are resettling to be REQUIRED to learn English? Why or why not?</td>
<td>21/23</td>
<td>2/23</td>
<td>Why</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Make life easier when resettled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- No opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- More English to integrate, plan, et cetera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Can’t get good job without it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- It is that important. Level of education in high school is not good. (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- English level is so low that we must require people to learn it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- If cannot speak English, no good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- I don’t know. (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Easier to get a job in country of resettlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Because people here don’t respect time and easy-going, lazy. They will get food either way, whether they work or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- To find job more easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- International language; can use English anywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Because of job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Easier to integrate and communicate when resettle to third country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Because refugees don’t have enough education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Because many foreigner come, and we should talk with them so that we can understand better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Because all should learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- For me, English is good for me. So if they learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Interest in English classes offered in the refugee camps

The refugees interviewed also believe that refugees that opt for resettlement should be required to take English classes because of the multitude of problems they will face in the third country if they are unprepared. For example, one refugee said English is essential because

…people complain…they have a really hard time in America and they really have a difficult life in America because, you know, they do not know how to communicate with the people and do not know how to speak what is on their mind. Like they cannot say [anything]. So I think they need English training or something like not training, like conversations, like eating, drinking, or something. They should know.

Phrases such as “because they have to know”, “so many problems [if] they don’t know how to speak”, and “they should learn, they should try to learn it” were used to describe why English should be required. One refugee suggested that service providers need to inform refugees the consequences of not learning English and the difficulties refugees face upon arrival through an information campaign similar to the health campaigns in the camp for HIV/AIDS prevention.

In addition to preparing refugees for resettlement, the refugees interviewed also mentioned that classes should be required because of the shyness and laziness of refugees. A refugee stated that refugees have time to take English classes, however, they are “just lazy [and] don’t want to give time. They say ‘Oh, we are too old. Not useful for us or something.’ Yeah, need to motivate.” Currently, some English classes require
refugees to buy books or pay a fee. If English classes were offered to prepare refugees for resettlement, the refugee interviewed stated that she thinks they will be interested in attending, especially if the classes were free; required classes will be useful for refugees to practice and gain confidence:

Karen people, they are very shy. They don’t know how to speak so they just keep quiet. Because you know, they are really worried about grammar and really worried about their pronunciation. But actually, we have to give knowledge…we don’t have to care about grammar and we don’t have to care about pronunciation, but they can at least, well, they can know something. They just need to know how to communicate with people and speak out.

One of the refugees also discussed the implications of an English program in light of the recent changes in Burma. He stated that although the future is unknown, at least “when we stay here, for me, we should try to upgrade our English to advance…we should upgrade ourselves, especially English language subjects, it’s my idea.”

Need

Need for an English program at the refugee camp level was measured through English proficiency levels, whether refugees attend English classes already, and barriers refugees face in accessing English classes. English proficiency levels were measured on a four point Likert scale as defined in Table 6. The majority of refugees surveyed demonstrated a limited English proficiency level (rating of 2) as indicated in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>English Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>7/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>13/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>0/23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: English proficiency levels of refugees
Of the twenty-three refugees surveyed, nine attend English classes and fourteen do not. The refugees that attend English classes are all in the 18-24 age group learning English either through high school or a post-10 school. A chi-square test conducted between age and attendance to English classes in both Mae La and Umphiem refugee camps was found to be positively associated and significant with a p-value of 0.04 at a 95% confidence level. This finding indicates that younger refugees, in the 18-24 year old age range, are more likely to attend English class in the camps than refugees in the older age ranges. A chi-square test also found highest level of education attained and attendance to English classes in Umphiem refugee camp to be positively associated and significant with a p-value of 0.088 at a 90% confidence level. This finding indicates that refugees with a higher level of education are associated with attending English classes; however, these variables are not as strongly associated as age and attendance to English classes. Additionally, the survey found lack of childcare to be the main reason explaining why refugees do not attend English classes. Table 7 further outlines other barriers refugees have in accessing English classes.
Refugee Availability to Attend English Classes

Refugees were also surveyed on their availability to attend English classes given their other daily activities such as childcare or employment which may interfere with their ability to access classes. The majority of refugees stated they are available three times a week to attend English classes. The survey findings indicated that there was no one common time for English classes to be offered, indicating the need to offer multiple classes at different times of the day to accommodate to the refugees’ schedules. Table 8 specifies refugee availability to attend classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why don’t you attend English classes?</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>0/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Desire</td>
<td>0/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Time</td>
<td>3/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too far away</td>
<td>1/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No teacher (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shy, nervous, no friends here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not enough teachers, many students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not offered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Everyone is much younger in the English classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Didn’t know about English classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Barriers to accessing English classes in the refugee camps.
When would be the best time to offer English classes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early morning</td>
<td>4/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>8/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>8/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekends</td>
<td>6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on situation. Important thing is money. If don’t go to English class, will ask children to go.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No free time now, but if free, Sunday is best.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Refugee availability to attend English classes.

The refugees that were interviewed believed English classes should be offered three times a week for three to six months before resettlement. When asked whether refugees have time to attend English classes with their work schedule, the refugees gave a definitive yes. One refugee stated that “they have plenty of time. Because…some people, like people who work, like, in my hospital, like Handicap [International], only they don’t have time to study. Probably they can communicate.” However, this same refugee participant described why she was not able to attend English classes in the camp:

No, because I had to look for a job and then I didn’t have time to study English. Because I came to Mae La camp with my sisters and brother because I…need to support them so I have to find a job. And then I think income, also, like, I don’t know at first, I don’t know where I should study English or where I should go. I apply for my job you know.

Other refugees may face similar circumstances where they must work to meet the needs of their family.
General Findings for Resettled Refugees in Colorado

A total of fifteen refugees resettled in Colorado were surveyed. The bulk of the resettled refugees fell within the age range of thirty-six to fifty years old as indicated in Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-64</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Age group of Resettled Refugees Surveyed in Colorado

The number of years the resettled refugees have been living in the United States ranged from one year to four years with the majority having lived in the United States for three years as demonstrated in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years living in the U.S.A.</th>
<th>Number of Resettled Refugees Surveyed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Number of years refugees have been resettled in USA.

The majority of the resettled refugees mentioned their children’s education for their primary reason for resettling. Other reasons included: freedom, security, to escape hardship of camp life, education, and job opportunities. Three of the fifteen resettled refugees interviewed are employed and the highest level education ranges from zero
years of formal schooling to 10th standard (the equivalent of completing high school or 12th grade in the United States) as indicated in Table 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of Education Completed</th>
<th>Number of Resettled Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Highest level of education completed by resettled refugees in Colorado.

The average English proficiency levels of the resettled refugees were slightly higher than the refugees in the camps. On a Likert scale of one to four, the camp refugees exhibited an average English proficiency level of 1.83 compared to 1.93 of resettled refugees. Excluding the 18-24 years old age group from the averages, the difference is greater; camp refugees over 24 years old have an average English proficiency level of 1.5 and resettled refugees have an average of 2.0. The majority of the resettled refugees surveyed reported having “little” English proficiency. These proficiency levels were compared against refugees’ level of education, number of years living in the U.S., whether they attended English classes in the refugee camps, and whether they attend or attended English classes in Colorado. The disaggregated results for individual responses are shown in Table 12.
In order to discern factors contributing to increased English proficiency, a chi-square test was performed to test the relationship between English proficiency levels and each of the variables mentioned above. The variables, ‘attend English class in camp’ and ‘English proficiency level’, exhibited a positive association significant with a p-value of 0.046 at a 95% confidence level. The significance of these variables demonstrates that the resettled refugees that attended English class in the camp are associated with higher English proficiency levels. In addition, average English proficiency levels were compared among the resettled refugees that attended English classes in the camps and those that did not; the resettled refugees that took English classes in the camps had an average English proficiency level of 2.6 and those that did not had an average of 1.6. When age was
controlled for by eliminating the 18-24 year old age group, the gap widened to a 1.2 difference. Additionally, the refugees that took English classes in the camps attained a higher level of education than those that did not take classes in the camps. Refugees that took English classes in the camp attained an average of 8.5 years of education whereas those that did not attend English classes attained an average of 3.3 years. However, higher levels of education were not found to be significantly associated to higher English proficiency levels with the chi-square test.

The other quantitatively analyzed variables did not produce significant results.2

Interest in English Classes offered in Refugee Camps

All resettled refugees surveyed reported yes to the question “Do you wish English classes were required in the refugee camps?” They stated it would help them communicate, find employment, integrate, and it will also benefit their children. Three resettled refugees also gave the following reasons:

- “Before come, very helpful to learn. Most important thing.”
- “To understand the situation here before they resettle.”
- “So fewer problems encountered in United States because no time to learn English in United States because have to work.”

The majority (six of fifteen) of the surveyed resettled refugees stated English classes in the camp should be offered for twelve months prior to departure, Monday through Friday, three hours a day, and in the morning time. Two refugees stated the English language training program should be seven days a week and one refugee said class should be all

2 Cross-tabulation analyses are available upon request.
day. Other resettled refugees indicated evening time as the best time to offer English classes, which demonstrates the need for English classes to be offered multiple times a day.

Reflections and Improving Resettlement

The resettled refugees surveyed were asked to reflect on their cultural orientation experiences in Thailand. Then they were asked to rate the effectiveness of their orientation after being resettled in the United States for a few years, make recommendations of cultural orientation topics that they wished were covered to enhance their resettlement experience, and suggest training refugees should receive before resettlement to facilitate their transition to the United States. Five of fifteen resettled refugees surveyed rated their cultural orientation to be “little beneficial”, four of fifteen beneficial, three of fifteen somewhat beneficial, and two of fifteen very beneficial. One resettled refugee stated cultural orientation needed to cover more topics because it only focused on travel. Other topics resettled refugees wished were covered to better meet their needs included learning English (five of fifteen) because they did not expect to encounter so many obstacles without English; employment (five of fifteen); Medicaid; money management; their rights; U.S. law; and time. One participant also stated it would be helpful if cultural orientation was taught by refugees that had gone through the resettlement process because “in cultural orientation, teachers were Thai and Karen and not refugees. They don’t know how to navigate what we have to do.” When resettled refugees were asked what training future refugees should receive before resettling to the
United States, twelve of fifteen stated English training and seven of fifteen suggested vocational training.

**General Findings for Organizational and Government Representatives**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for six non-governmental organization representatives, three international organization representatives, and one government official as shown in Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Non-governmental Organization | ZOA Care (ZOA)  
|                        | International Rescue Committee (IRC)                                          |
|                        | World Education (WE)                                                        |
|                        | Karen Refugee Camp Education Entity (KRCEE)                                  |
| International Organization | United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR)                      |
|                        | International Organization for Migration (IOM)                             |
| Government             | United States Government Refugee Coordinator, Bangkok                      |

Table 13: Organizations interviewed by type

Eighteen organizations along the Thai-Burma border, including the non-governmental and international organizations listed in Table 13, coordinate their services to the refugees in a network called the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT). Composed of eighteen agencies, the actors meet regularly to exchange information and discuss their work in different sub-committee, working group, or sector meetings. The non-governmental organization members are also joined by international organizations and interested embassies to serve as an information sharing point and coordinating point for refugee service provision. My colleague and I attended the CCSDPT general meeting and education sub-committee meeting. Some of the agencies present included UNHCR, European Community
Humanitarian Office (ECHO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Thai Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), World Education (WE), ZOA, Right to Play, Amnesty International, a Thai government official, and other non-governmental organizations. These regular meetings serve as an information sharing and coordination point for actors involved in service provision for refugees along the border. The actors provided situation updates and discussed concerns involving inter-sector coordination, such as how to support conditions for return. The key theme during the education sub-committee meeting was lack of funding.

Priorities

The main objective of asking interviewees about their organizational priorities was to gauge where priorities for long-term resettlement such as English language training may fall. IRC and IOM participants prioritize confidence building, encouragement, and self-esteem building for their programming. ZOA’s priorities focused on ensuring long-term resettlement success. Its two priorities in order of importance include: 1) support refugees for resettlement, and 2) open up opportunities for those who cannot resettle to go to schools (such as the elderly and those who have been kicked out of school). WE prioritizes both quality and access. It aims to provide a certain standard of education and ensure access for all.

The UNHCR interviewee stated there is “not as much emphasis on prioritizing because anybody can get [in the resettlement program].” However, the priorities of UNHCR focus on protection within the camps and ensuring refugees have access to
durable solutions. The representative stated that UNHCR has renewed emphasis on family unity and reaching out to the disabled, survivors of gender-based violence, and anyone with medical conditions. Child protection, administration of justice, maintaining a civilian nature in camps, and continuing the search for durable solutions were mentioned as other priorities. The restrictive mandate of UNHCR suggests protection of refugees extends narrowly within the confines of the camp.

Barriers and Challenges

Participants were asked about barriers to explore the challenges of service provision in the current environment and possible challenges to instituting English language classes in refugee camps. Lack of funding emerged as a common barrier among UNHCR, Karen Refugee Camp Education Entity (KRCEE), WE, U.S. refugee coordinator, and ZOA. Lack of motivation and the depletion of skilled and qualified workers from the refugee camps embody other challenges faced by IRC, ZOA, and IOM in their service provision.

The severe lack of funding was reported by the U.S. refugee coordinator, WE, UNHCR, and KRCEE to be related to the shift in funding priorities by donors and organizations. The following quotes exemplify the effects caused by donors and organizations shifting funding out of the refugee camps:
The U.S. refugee coordinator stated:

The EU has been what they’re referring to shifting their funding from humanitarian emergency response to development programs. That’s happening over the course of the last year. They’re still funding education and some of the food and health, but yeah, they are shifting their funding to more of a development model. But the refugees don’t benefit as much from that. So ultimately in the camp, there’s a decrease. The Department of State has been spending more money on food and health as a result of their decreases so I think they’re kind of reevaluating their whole play on it as well. They would also like to spend more money inside of Burma in order to improve the conditions so that the refugees can eventually go home.

The WE interviewee stated:

We’re even stretched to even provide the basic services right now. And there’s a possibility that might even increase. Because the mentality of some people is that, ‘oh, things in Burma are improving, they might go in a better direction, refugees might go home’ so therefore we don’t need to put money into the camps. [And] the mentality of some people, some donors, is that ‘oh, there’s resettlement, so you don’t need as many resources.’

The UNHCR official referred to organizations like ZOA repositioning themselves in Burma given the recent improvements by stating:

Well, they’re [ZOA] looking to the other side of the border, perhaps. You see, everyone is positioning themselves now, but nobody has that much of a presence yet...It’ll be an interesting year, interesting time.

KRCEE participants discussed challenges in service-provision given that they expect funding to their organization will decrease:

The international community will fund more inside Burma and reduce financial assistance to refugees in every part – health, education, livelihoods. We need to take more time for preparation.

The lack of funding was found to be affecting programming. As a result of the European Union’s shift of funds from the refugee camps to inside Burma, the U.S. Department of State has been pressured to spend more money on basic needs instead of livelihood projects. The U.S. refugee coordinator discussed the government’s desire to fund small
microenterprise business development programs in the refugee camps because it is crucial for the refugees to develop critical skills useful for anywhere they go, however, funding is needed. WE’s ability to provide English classes is threatened because of lack of funding; he stated: “if we don’t get additional funding, then teacher stipends, school infrastructure, and teaching and learning materials are all going to be compromised for sure…it’s no lack of will. It’s funding.” This widespread consensus among interviewees regarding shifting funding priorities hints at a larger problem of lack of coordination and communication between organizations in the refugee regime.

The study found lack of motivation as the second major barrier to service provision. IRC and IOM expressed the difficulties of providing cultural orientation classes to refugees because of their lack of motivation. Lack of motivation is a major concern because IOM and WE noted that students tended to drop out of school and IRC expressed concern over whether refugees would even attend English classes. For example, the WE representative described the recent trend among students:

One of the things that’s happening with education is that we get reports that once kids are accepted for resettlement, I won’t say many, I would say a number of them drop out of school because they say ‘I’m going to the States and I’ll go to school there so why do I need to go to school here?’ So there’s a negative effect. Rather than saying I’m going to learn as much English here as I can,’ people tend to drop out.

IRC and ZOA discussed the challenges of the refugees being illiterate and having little to no formal education and exposure to the Western world as challenges in providing cultural orientation and English classes to refugees. Furthermore, ZOA stated the refugees’ fear of failure as another challenge; refugees tend to move up class levels for their English classes because they do not want to feel like a failure.
Other barriers include the inconsistent information refugees receive from their family and friends who have resettled at different points of time; the IRC representative noted this barrier as dangerously misconstruing expectations about resettlement. ZOA, UNHCR, and WE also mentioned the lack of skilled and qualified workers such as teachers and insufficient stipends to incentivize teachers to continue teaching serves as a barrier to service provision.

Key Needs

To gauge where English language training would stand against the other needs in the camps, participants were asked to discuss key needs in the refugee camps. Four organizations, ZOA, U.S. refugee coordinator, WE, and IOM, stressed funding to be the greatest need. The lack of funding has made it difficult for the basic needs such as food, water, and health to be met in the camp noted ZOA, WE, and the U.S. refugee coordinator. WE specified that the number one need is ensuring the food basket meets international standards. After basic needs have been met, ZOA and WE noted the need for increased human resources. The mass resettlement program was improperly planned, according to UNHCR, and caused a brain drain which has left few qualified teachers and skilled workers. In combination with the lack of funding to pay suitable teacher stipends, provide teaching and learning materials, and infrastructure for classrooms, the refugee education system is suffering. The U.S. refugee coordinator emphasized the key need to prepare refugees for an active life once they are outside the camp by focusing on education “so that it is not a wasted period of time [and] so that they’re able to have these
active lives one day.” The WE representative similarly stated that “there’s a need to tailor the current system to better meet the needs of people who are going to be resettled and people for return.” However, despite the multiple needs in the refugee camps, the biggest problem is funding in this protracted refugee situation environment according to the IOM representative. Table 14 delineates needs of refugee camps as identified by organizational representatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Need in Refugee Camp</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic needs</td>
<td>ZOA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Refugee Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>ZOA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>UNHCR</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>U.S. Refugee Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>ZOA</td>
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<td>USG</td>
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<td>WE</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
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</table>

Table 14: Key needs in refugee camps identified by organization

Organizational attitudes toward refugee livelihoods

The interview explored the attitudes of participants towards the livelihoods of resettled refugees to determine whether programming was geared toward the success of resettlement. The focus of IRC and IOM is on cultural orientation and pre-departure orientation, however, the lack of funding prevents more programmatic focus on preparation for successful resettlement. IOM stressed the need for more English training as well as the importance of an individual’s motivation when resettled in a new country in determining the individual’s livelihood. UNHCR programming is carried out through
implementing partners and is not geared towards the livelihoods of resettled refugees. According to the UNHCR representative, UNHCR’s interest is in getting refugees to the country of resettlement, whereas addressing livelihoods through training is a part that should be driven by the resettlement country. However, the UNHCR representative does believe the specific context of the refugees along the Thai-Burma border calls for programming to better prepare refugees for resettlement. The representative attributed lack of planning as a challenge to improve refugee livelihoods. The way the resettlement program has been operating, the camp has experienced a brain drain and skill drain because it has become depleted of experienced and qualified workers. From a programmatic perspective, the UNHCR representative stated that lack of planning could have prevented this brain drain because now there are fewer qualified workers to train the less qualified and less educated refugees because the educated refugees were the first ones to leave.

Attitudes toward English Language Training Programs

When the question “would you recommend mandating English language training prior to resettlement?” was asked, IOM, IRC and the U.S. refugee coordinator stated it should be optional. The IOM representative believes English language training would help improve long-term resettlement success, but the problem is funding. He discussed and described the English as a Second Language program conducted in Tham Hin camp in 2006 for four to five weeks as well-received and the pilot program IRC implemented in 2011 in Mae La camp using native English speakers as effective. The IRC
representative does not believe English classes should be required as a prerequisite but believes classes should be offered as an option for those specifically opting for resettlement:

I don’t think I would require it as a prerequisite [to resettlement]. If there were classes for people specifically involved in the process or if there were classes offered through other organizations. Of course there should be every option to help people to provide [for] themselves.

She further discussed IRC’s pilot program which was highly encouraged but not mandatory for refugees to attend; she noted that refugees came because they saw it as a special opportunity at a level that was not too challenging. However, she remained skeptical as to whether refugees would come if the program was continuous because the target population changes each time. The U.S. refugee coordinator offered a broader perspective and noted possible consequences of mandating an English training program prior to resettlement by highlighting the fact that the U.S. resettlement program is humanitarian and in many ways a rescue program. Creating eligibility prerequisites for resettlement to the U.S. would defeat the purpose of the program. She also stated the option for newcomers to receive help from the well-established communities, and that the focus of the program is on children, who tend to learn new languages quickly.

The representatives of ZOA and WE supported English language training as a requirement prior to resettlement. The ZOA interviewee stated:

I would like to support them with English language training [because] cultural orientation for one week is not enough. It is not enough time to grasp the implications of their choice. They have never seen airplanes, toilets, diapers, etcetera. [They] don’t have resources like telephones or computers to use.

However, he also noted it would be unfair to not offer English classes as a choice. The WE interviewee had experience with a former more comprehensive resettlement program
called the Overseas Refugee Training Program (ORTP) that had an intensive English language component in addition to vocational training and cultural orientation. He stated that he would recommend English, cultural orientation, and work orientation as a requirement prior to resettlement because “I think what we had in place before was excellent.” He also stated:

Yeah, I think it’s perfectly okay for a country accepting refugees to require a certain amount of preparation. I think it would be kind of dicey to offer it, but say if you want it or if you don’t, the impact is going to come from making it mandatory so that people participate.

Comparing the refugees who entered the U.S. after attending the ORTP program with the refugees who entered the U.S. after the termination of the ORTP program, the interviewee noted a huge difference in terms of their ability to adapt to the environment in the country of resettlement. However, the WE representative resignedly stated that there is no support for a program like ORTP now because of lack of funding despite its past success for refugee resettlement.

Furthermore, ZOA embraced the idea of creating a more language intensive program geared towards resettlement; he stated that refugees do not know the importance of English in the U.S. and the IRC only has a few days to inform the refugees of the importance of English during their last weeks in the camp, hinting at the inappropriateness of such a short orientation. A longer cultural orientation with a focus on language training is necessary to better prepare refugees for resettlement, as supported by KRCEE interviewees.
Improving the Resettlement Process

The main themes that transpired from the question, “How would you improve the current resettlement process” included: increased coordination and communication between stakeholders; improved culture brokering techniques; and increased funding for a language intensive cultural orientation. Representatives from IRC, IOM, and UNHCR believe there is a need for increased communication and coordination among all stakeholders, including the service receivers. The current protection practices by UNHCR are approached “too much as more of an administrative exercise rather than as a protection exercise or as a community exercise.” The representative believes a more community-based outreach and use of individual protection interventions would improve the resettlement process by “maximizing resettlement opportunities in a protection-oriented manner for all refugees in need.” This participatory approach, in his opinion, would lead to greater reach and improved information dissemination regarding protection options available for the disabled and survivors of gender-based violence, who may be unaware of their eligibility. The U.S. government funds the IRC to provide cultural orientation to refugees that will be resettled in the United States. Once the refugee reaches their respective destinations, resettlement agencies take the lead role in ensuring refugees’ basic needs are met and providing an additional cultural orientation to the one that IRC provides in the first country of asylum. Constant coordination and communication between resettlement agencies in the resettlement country and organizations overseas is necessary to ensure adequate service provision. The interview participant from IRC accredits the organization’s success in reaching the IRC’s
objectives because of three factors: its connection with the IRC in the U.S.;
communication with resettlement agencies in the U.S. (to be aware of the struggles
resettled refugees face); and feedback from refugees. IRC aims to utilize informal
channels of communication as well as newsletters, and a DVD made by the Center on
Applied Linguistics (which provides materials for the IRC’s cultural orientation
curriculum) of the anecdotes of resettled refugees to better inform refugees that plan to
resettle. Anecdotal information from resettled refugees’ experiences is carefully dealt
with to minimize misinformation and misconstruing expectations and the IRC and IOM
manage expectations through information dissemination about what to expect in the
country of resettlement. The IOM representative suggested a two-way communication to
keep refugees actively informed and occupied with information about useful things such
as learning the target language. The IOM representative stressed the need for
coordination between international organizations and the community-based organizations
to improve resettlement because of the lack of dialogue at this point. It is important for
local community-based organizations to be more involved with the refugee population
that opts for resettlement. The community-based organizations are generally unsupportive
of resettlement because they are seen as the lucky ones; they tend to focus their efforts on
those refugees who aim to return to Burma.

Three organizations, IRC, IOM, and ZOA, mentioned issues surrounding
improved lessons on cultural adaptation to improve the resettlement process. Currently,
cultural orientation for refugees in Thailand lasts between three to five days. The
representative from IRC noted that it is impossible to undo many years of a particular
behavior, but it is important to at least ensure the refugees are aware of what is expected from them at a workplace and what type of thinking is beneficial. For example, it is not rude to ask questions or speak up in the U.S., rather it is encouraged. The organizations aim to communicate to refugees that they do have some power and rights which they may not have had in their home country; they believe exposing refugees to these aspects of U.S. culture and values at an earlier stage will make the resettlement process easier. The interviewee from ZOA advised providing more practical activities so that refugees could have hands on practice to cement key lessons being learned. Motivating refugees and finding ways to change and develop mindset were ideas recommended by IOM to improve the resettlement process. The IOM representative gave the example of how a motivated resettled refugee learned to say one sentence, “I want to have a job,” in English. She was outspoken even without English skills, and it landed her a job. The refugees from Burma, in general, lack this motivation perhaps in part due to the negative effects of long-term encampment.

WE, ZOA, IRC, and IOM mentioned the need to increase resources to provide English through a more intensive cultural orientation as another way to improve resettlement. The short length of cultural orientation negates any time for language training. Topics such as airplane travel and other practicalities like their rights and transportation aim to open a door and build confidence and excitement, according to the IRC representative. Language is recognized as an important part of successful resettlement, however, resources are limited. The WE representative discussed his attempt to expand resettlement through the IRC:
I went to IRC and said ‘I’m not sure if you know it or not, but [World Education] used to be involved in the resettlement program before and if you wanted to do an expanded type of resettlement, we got the expertise, we got the documentation, we got everything from before that we can bring into play.’ And they just said that there’s no funding beyond what we can do now which is just a few days of pre-departure training.

The WE interviewee stated a need for increased advocacy on the part of the resettlement agencies in the U.S. to get the message through to the U.S. Department of State that refugees are not arriving prepared and all the weight is falling on the states without sufficient support from the federal government. The IOM interviewee mentioned that English skills would improve the resettlement process and the ZOA representative believes native speakers of English are needed because they know and have the ability to explain the situation of the U.S. to refugees so that they know what to expect. The only information they receive is from IRC in a three to five day period which is insufficient.

The IRC conducted a pilot language program in Mae La refugee camp; however, the results are unknown. Additionally, UNHCR partnered with Manpower in 2010 in a pilot study to improve resettlement process (however, the results remain unknown as well). These investments, at the very least, demonstrate the recognition by the organizations of the need to provide language training at the camp level before resettlement.
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

Overview

Consistent with prior studies, this study’s findings suggest that exposure to English through classes in the refugee camps is associated with higher levels of English proficiency in the country of resettlement. These findings are similar to Beiser and Hou (2001) and Tollefson (1985) where prior exposure to English indicated higher English proficiency levels. Moreover, it is important to note that the differences between the refugees who attended class in the camps and those who did not were due to age. Younger refugees, particularly from 18-24 years old, were more likely to attend English classes in comparison to the older age groups. This difference may be related to the accessibility of English classes which may be more difficult for older refugees because of family and child care responsibilities. This study found employment in the camps, childcare, unawareness of available English classes, lack of teachers, and the perception they are too old to attend classes to embody the main challenges in terms of access. After controlling for the effects of age in the analysis of the results, this study found refugees with higher educational attainment to be more likely to attend English classes in the camps than those refugees with little to no prior education experience. Refugees that attended English classes in the camps attained an average of 8.5 years of schooling whereas refugees that did not attend English classes attained an average of 3.3 years of schooling. However, prior studies indicate education is not related to higher economic
status; rather English proficiency is related to higher economic status (U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011; Race and Masini, 1996; Potocky and McDonald, 1995; Majka and Mullan, 1992; and Vinokurov et al., 2000).

The older less educated camp and resettled refugees unanimously recognized the importance of English for resettlement and their future; however, they were found less likely to attend English classes in the camps because of a pervasive lack of motivation, a major theme found in this study. The majority of the service-provider representatives noted this lack of motivation and the need to use confidence-building techniques to instill motivation and self-sufficiency. This lack of motivation was voiced by refugees themselves as a barrier to attending classes and a challenge to organizational representatives in terms of service provision. It is likely that for some refugees, long-term encampment has created a deep dependency on aid and a sense of hopelessness. English classes in the camps require a degree of initiation by the refugees; the programs do not seek out students. However, developing motivation requires other needs, such as bodily, safety, belongingness, and respect needs, to be met (Elmeroth, 2003, p. 440). Although bodily and safety needs can be met in the country of resettlement, belongingness and respect are not as easy to fulfill. Refugees face an entirely new environment along with an increased number of challenges to accessing English classes in the country of resettlement. The seemingly positive factors to learning the target language in the country of resettlement, such as the opportunity to practice with native speakers, are in fact incorrect because of social and institutional barriers, negative stereotypes towards refugees, and feelings of isolation (Elmeroth, 2003).
This dependency and lack of motivation explain the majority of the service providers’ support for standardized English classes in the camps as an option to refugees who plan to resettle. This study found camp refugees, almost unanimously, to support mandatory standardized English classes in the camp prior to departure for preemptive reasons. For example, they believe English will help mitigate future problems, improve communication abilities, facilitate integration, improve their future, and aid in attaining employment; one refugee also explained it would be better to require classes because refugees are lazy and will not attend classes if not pushed. The study found resettled refugees to unanimously support mandatory standardized English classes in the camps. Their reasons were similar to the camp refugees, however, the differences lie in the fact that camp refugees are unaware of the difficulties associated with finding time to learn English in the U.S. because of work and also camp refugees are unable to comprehend what to expect before resettlement, as put by the resettled refugees. The resettled refugees’ reasons suggest that their initial expectations were incongruent with reality. The finding that resettled refugees, on average, suggested a significantly longer English training program than camp refugees led to my inference that resettled refugees recognize English as a greater importance for resettlement because of the numerous challenges they personally faced due to not being prepared from their lack of English proficiency.

The difference between the perceptions of the majority of organizational representatives and the refugees over whether English classes in the camps should be optional or mandatory may have been due to the operational and situational factors of the camp and situation in Burma that the representatives are acutely aware. The study found
lack of funding and shifting of funding priorities as the two major themes representing challenges to service provision in camps. I infer the positive vibes felt about Burma, which were sparked by the reforms being made inside Burma, prompted the European Union, a donor, and ZOA, a non-governmental organization, to shift their focus from inside the camps to inside of Burma to prepare for possible repatriation as the organizational representative interviewee stated in the interview. This shift and decrease of funds inside the camp has highlighted the incoherence of the refugee regime because of the fact that refugees still need support for food, health, education, and livelihoods even though conditions inside Burma are improving. This disconnect indicates the pervasive problem of donor fatigue in protracted refugee situations and lack of coordination among actors to encourage efficient allocation of resources.

The exploratory nature of this study should be noted. The findings are based on a small group of refugees and organizational representatives that likely are representative of key aspects of the situation of the majority of the refugees along the Thai-Burma border and those resettled in Denver. Despite these limitations, overall the findings are encouraging. This study attempts to improve the process beginning in the refugee camp in the form of protection and prevention (not featured herein) given the social and institutional barriers older resettled refugees face in accessing English classes and attaining employment based on prior studies (Race et al., 1996, p. 287). The results of the cross tabulation analysis clearly indicate the benefit of early exposure to English for higher English proficiency levels (Tollefson, 1985; Beiser and Hou, 2001) and the need to cater classes toward older refugees because of their lack of motivation and barriers to
accessing services. Furthermore, the results of the thematic analysis suggest a complex operational environment where funding is limited, organizations are uncoordinated, and a need for a more innovative approach to this global refugee problem.

**Analysis and Recommendations**

This section discusses the results of the study based on the two research questions proposed earlier:

1. **What are the advantages and disadvantages of learning English in the refugee camps versus in the third country of resettlement?**

2. **What are the possibilities of implementing a formalized English language training program in the refugee camps to improve long-term resettlement success?**

These research questions are discussed in the context of the refugee regime and supported by findings from this study, relevant literature, and prior studies. Recommendations are also suggested within the discussion.

*What are the advantages and disadvantages of learning English in the refugee camps versus in the third country of resettlement?*

This study found several advantages associated with learning English prior to resettlement including higher eventual attainment of English; fewer barriers to access; fewer problems in the third country; more time to address problems from encampment; and burden-sharing among refugee resettlement actors. Some disadvantages include
fewer native speakers, fewer resources; and competition with other higher priority needs in the camp for funding.

This study found refugees who learned English in the camps prior to resettlement to have higher levels of English proficiency. The resettled refugees also expressed strong interest in the idea of mandatory English classes in the refugee camps because of the fewer problems they would have encountered in the third country retrospectively. Insight from the resettled refugees was particularly important because of their personal experiences with the resettlement process and their acute awareness of the complexities and difficulties associated with resettlement that camp refugees and service providers initially might not understand. These findings also demonstrate how the U.S. refugee resettlement policy and other structurally embedded societal and institutional barriers obstruct refugees from attaining self-sufficiency faster, indicating the advantages of implementing English classes in the camps.

The U.S. refugee resettlement program emphasizes self-sufficiency through quick employment as spelled out by the Refugee Act of 1980. This approach has proven counter-productive for the successful integration of the refugees because it neglects the prioritization of language skills. Language proficiency is a key indicator of integration (Dwyer, 2010) and it has been found to be linked to employability and achieving economic self-sufficiency (Halpern, 2008; U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011; Race et al., 1996; Potocky and McDonald, 1995; Majka and Mullan, 1992; and Vinokurov et al., 2000; Beiser and Hou, 2001; Beiser, 2011; Tollefson, 1985), however, recent refugee arrivals unlike past refugees lack this vital skill
(U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011). Only 20.0% of the resettled refugees surveyed in this study were employed and prior studies indicate widespread low employment and underemployment of the more recent refugee flows because of lower English proficiency rates (Halpern, 2008; U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, 2011). These studies which demonstrate the linkage between higher language proficiency and employability manifest the illogical approach of the U.S. resettlement program because of its emphasis on employment-first upon arrival. Availability of funding for refugee assistance was also significantly cut in 1991 from thirty-six months to eight months, pressuring refugees to prioritize employment versus language training. Additionally, refugees face barriers to accessing English classes in the third country. These include expensive transportation costs, unaffordable childcare, work schedule conflicts, expensive classes, and lack of information on how to access classes (Gray and Elliot, 2001; Tollefson, 1985; Altinkaya and Omundsen, 1999). In comparison, this study found childcare, employment, lack of teachers, and unawareness of English classes as constraint for refugees from accessing classes in the camp. However, I infer that these challenges would be easier to overcome because of the closed camp setting. The challenges in the country of resettlement are more difficult to tackle because refugees are spread out and the barriers are institutional in nature.

The lack of social service programs fostering interaction between refugees and natives also exacerbates the ability of refugees to successfully integrate into their new communities in the third country. Resettled refugees commonly remain isolated from native speakers and community events that would be useful for their integration because
of factors which are structurally embedded in legal frameworks and the lack of forward-thinking strategy for resettlement policy (Strang and Ager, 2010, p. 599). Refugees tend to be housed in apartment complexes with other refugees and frequently work manual labor jobs that do not require the use of English. Oftentimes, the only contact refugees have with native speakers is their teacher (Elmeroth, 2003).

Instituting English classes in the camps would be advantageous because it can serve as a buffer for refugees. English classes mitigate the negative consequences refugees may endure from not being able to speak any English upon arrival. For example, increased English proficiency will reduce barriers to obtaining employment and accessing English classes simultaneously, improve their ability to learn the language more quickly, create less parental dependency on children for interpretation, improve general communication, and facilitate faster integration into their new communities. Equipping refugees with some English prior to resettlement will jumpstart their integration process and perhaps promote self-sufficiency. From the finding that resettled refugees wish language training was provided before resettlement and their strong support for mandatory classes, I infer that learning English in the third country is not adequately meeting the needs of the refugees. Not only do they face many barriers to accessing classes, their ability to learn the language at a faster pace is hampered by pressure to find employment and difficulties adjusting to other environmental factors in their new home.

Additionally, learning English earlier in the camps helps to address and mitigate some of the deeply entrenched problems some refugees may face as a result of encampment versus inundating refugees with everything at once (“front-loading”) upon
arrival. The study found widespread lack of motivation and dependency among camp refugees which I infer to be in part due to the effects of many years of encampment. The impact of long-term encampment suggests the need for a longer and more extensive pre-departure orientation to prepare refugees for resettlement. Representatives from IRC, ZOA, and IOM discussed lack of motivation as one of the biggest barriers they face in service provision as well. They described the need for “confidence building,” “self-esteem building,” “empowerment,” “self-reliance,” and “encouragement” to combat a pervasive lack of motivation for this particular refugee population. These themes represent intrinsic barriers to acquiring a new language and in turn long-term resettlement success. It is unfeasible to address these engrained issues, as IOM and IRC attempt in their lessons, in just three to five days before refugees depart. Earlier introduction of U.S. values of independence and entrepreneurship such as the right to question and speak up is vital for a refugee population that is customarily submissive and whose culture encourages rote memorization versus creative and analytical thinking. The organizational representatives highlighted the need for a longer cultural orientation and increased resources to provide an intensive language component of cultural orientation to better prepare refugees for resettlement. Likewise, prior studies also recommended a longer and more extensive orientation because of the difficulties refugees face in absorbing and processing the massive amounts of information they are given in a short period of time (Columbia University, 2010). More resources need to be dedicated specifically to protracted refugee situations such as this case study indicates, where a long-term
resettlement program is in place and there is time to address the needs of refugees by preparing them better before resettlement.

English training in the camp is advantageous because it serves as a form of burden sharing among actors in the refugee resettlement regime. UNHCR is attempting to use resettlement as a strategic solution by expanding the number of participating resettlement countries. However, resettlement can be a burden for local communities and a strain on the resources of a receiving country, as it has been for the U.S. Global resettlement capacity is limited and some countries determine their resettlement capacity on an ad hoc basis based on international need, regional and geographic considerations, as well as domestic considerations (Working Group on Resettlement, 2003). To use resettlement more strategically and present it as a burden sharing exercise, it may be beneficial overall for countries to take on different roles and in a more coordinated manner (Working Group on Resettlement, 2003). For example, beginning target language training in the camps in the country of first asylum may be a way to minimize the strain of resettlement on receiving countries if refugees arrive more prepared with a less acute need for assistance. Refugees may be able to achieve self-sufficiency and integration more quickly and become active and contributing members in society versus representing a parasitic strain on community resources. This practice of burden sharing may also present resettlement as a more attractive option to other potential receiving countries and serve to expand resettlement.

Although there are many advantages to instituting English classes in the camp before resettlement, camp conditions are not ideal for learning a new language. For
example, there are fewer native speakers in the camp for refugees to practice English. Prior studies have demonstrated that practice with native speakers leads to greatest improvement (Gray and Elliot, 2001). Despite these findings, access to native speakers in the third country is not guaranteed and it is infrequent (Elmeroth, 2003; Gray and Elliot, 2001). Resources in the camps are also scarcer than in the third country. The majority of the skilled and qualified workers, such as teachers, have already been resettled, and the ones that remain do not stay in their position for longer than a year (on average) because of decreasing teacher stipends in the camp. Finally, the camp faces a host of other needs, many of which are more urgent than English training in comparison, and funding is limited. For example, many of the refugees do not receive adequate food rations because they were recently cut in light of funding shortages. It would be difficult to obtain funding for a need that is lower on the donor’s list of priorities.

*What are the possibilities of implementing a formalized English language training program in the refugee camps to improve long-term resettlement success?*

I evaluate this research question based on three key indicators and then discuss the possibilities of implementing language training programs in the camps based on two critical metrics being met. The three key indicators I used to determine the possibility of implementing a formalized English language training program in the camps include barriers, political will and interest, and sufficient resources. The ability to address these three indicators demonstrates the greater prospect of successfully implementing a language training program in the camps.
Barriers. Barriers were chosen as an indicator because it informs programming by determining possible obstacles to accessing and instituting classes. Many of the camp refugees have obligations such as childcare or work which may bar them from attending classes; however, based on this study’s findings, the majority of the camp refugees indicated they have free time to attend English classes in the camp despite their responsibilities. The results indicated that refugee availability to attend classes varied, which demonstrates the need to offer classes multiple times a day. Furthermore, it is also possible, timeline-wise, to institute a standardized language training program for approximately six months prior to departure because the waiting period from when refugees have been accepted to a third country to departure averages six months at minimum.

Political will and interest. Political will and interest among organizations and stakeholders to implement language classes in the camps is important in terms of placing the issue on the agenda and generating momentum. Amongst the refugees, there is great interest in the idea of language training classes in the camps, both as an option and as a requirement. Communication between the resettled refugees in the U.S. and the camp refugees in Thailand has led to increased awareness of the difficulties such as finding employment that they will face without language proficiency. This deep interest in attending language classes with the goal of furthering their well-being in the future indicates a strong demand for language training classes. There exists political will among the organizations on the Thai-Burma border for preparatory language classes in the camps as well. Although the majority of the organizational representatives interviewed
indicated their preference for optional classes over mandatory classes, they all recognized the importance and need for a more language-intensive cultural orientation because of the inadequacy of the current pre-departure orientation. A few of the representatives interviewed also mentioned the previous pilot English as a Second Language (ESL) programs conducted in the refugee camps to meet the growing need for refugees to be better prepared for long-term resettlement success. The IOM representative discussed the well-received pilot ESL program in Tham Hin refugee camp in 2006 as well as IRC’s effective pilot English language program in Mae La camp in 2011. Multiple representatives also discussed UNHCR’s partnership with Manpower to conduct a vocational and language orientation pilot program in 2010. The fact that multiple pilot English language programs were carried out in the Thai-Burma border camp context demonstrates the already high interest and recognized need to institute preparatory language classes. However, lack of funding was found to be the main impeding factor for establishing permanent English language training programs in the camps.

Resources. Financial and human resources are vital to the success of implementing a language training program in the camps. This study found both financial and human resources to be lacking because of the complex operational environment along the Thai-Burma border. The protracted nature of this refugee situation has led to donor fatigue and the mass resettlement program has led to a brain drain and skill drain. Furthermore, the evolving political situation in Burma has caused the shifting of funding priorities. This study found a pervasive lack of funding for programs in the camps as a result. The only non-formal education program in the camp targeting adults in
preparation for resettlement is being phased out and the organization’s resources are being invested inside Burma instead. Furthermore, this study found that the non-governmental organization, World Education, cannot provide English classes anymore because of lack of funding and the U.S. Department of State is unable to fund its livelihood projects because they need to increase the amount of money allocated towards food and health to compensate for the E.U.’s shifting of funds to inside Burma. These findings are important because they demonstrate the incoherence of the refugee regime and the complexity of the resettlement issue in the context of the evolving political situation in Burma. The optimism felt throughout the Thai-Burma border from the initial reforms made by the Government of Burma is expected to and has triggered the E.U. and ZOA to begin phasing out and reducing funding in the camps to concentrate more resources inside Burma. The growing complexity of refugee situations such as illustrated in this case study call for a less conventional structure that is able to enhance predictability and coordination across organizations to accommodate increasingly complex issues and needs, such as preparatory language training classes before resettlement.

Overall, the possibility of implementing a language training program in the camps is hampered by lack of funding. There is no lack of political will in implementing language training preparatory classes for refugees because the need is evident. Additionally, refugees expressed availability to attend classes and there are minimal external barriers to accessing classes. The main barriers identified, childcare and employment, may be easily addressed in the form of offering multiple classes a day or
providing free childcare. In order to mitigate the pervasive financial resource challenge and make the implementation of language classes in the camps a possibility, I suggest the following two metrics be met: regular communication among stakeholders and increased cross-sectoral partnerships.

*Regular communication.* Improved communication among stakeholders is necessary to improve the possibility of successfully implementing language training programs in the camps. Communication is vital because this study found many of the camp refugees to be unaware of English programs offered in the camps. An ongoing dialogue needs to be established between service providers and refugees as well as between community-based organizations and international organizations, as the IOM representative noted. Refugees need to be adequately informed early on in the process of the difficulties and hardships they are likely to encounter in the country of resettlement without language proficiency in order for the refugees to develop intrinsic motivation to attend and participate in language classes. The study found that the majority of the refugees understand the importance of learning English before resettlement, however, an ongoing dialogue with the refugees opting for resettlement will help to manage expectations and ensure fair knowledge of information.

Communication between international organizations and donors is also vital to ensure donors are informed of the importance of preparing refugees through language training for long-term resettlement success. This study found a disconnect between the donors and the field offices because donors assumed resettlement and improved conditions within Burma indicated the need for less funding inside the camps, however,
the opposite is true. Maintained or increased levels of funding are needed to train workers to replace the educated and skilled workers that resettle. Also, the number of refugees that leave through the mass resettlement program do not equate to a proportionate drop in the number of refugees in the camp because of the steady flow of new unregistered refugees trickling in from Burma. Finally, communication with donors is vital to ensure investment is made in livelihood activities and capacity-building programs such as the language training program. These programs are vital for refugees in protracted refugee situations, especially those that plan to resettle, because they build skills and stimulate social and economic interdependence to restore functioning social networks and create less dependency on aid (Jacobsen, 2002). However, these programs are often overlooked by donors.

**Cross-sectoral partnerships.** Responding to the world’s complex challenges in an environment with limited resources requires partnerships among governments, international organizations, businesses, and civil society, also known as global public policy networks. Each sector has a strength which it can bring to the table: governments have enforcement and rule-making power, international organization coordinate and capacity-build, businesses have the financial might, and civil society has the voluntary energy and legitimacy to drive the network forward. In the case of this study, there is some cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation between governments and international organizations (Witte et al., 2000) through the network, Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT); however, the network faces barriers in addressing the challenges along the Thai-Burma border because of lack of
funding. CCSDPT could more effectively and efficiently address challenges by partnering with the business sector. Businesses have the resources, including financial resources, to address the issue at hand in complement with the efforts of governments and international organizations. For example, Manpower, a private consulting firm and world leader in employment services, is a potential business firm that CCSDPT could coordinate with to address the issue of ensuring resettlement is a durable solution through language training in the camps. In 2010, UNHCR formed a partnership with Manpower in a skills-building pilot project aiming to foster self-reliance for refugees in a refugee camp in northern Thailand. Trainers taught refugees the basic skills needed to work in an office in the U.S. in English for six weeks in the camp ("Manpower and UNHCR", 2010). However, this project was short lived and the results are unknown. There is a need for a more permanent partnership integrated into a network so that skills-building programs like language training programs have the potential of becoming norms in the resettlement regime.

The global governance challenges of the world demand innovative responses and the use of global public policy networks proffers an effective way to use limited resources strategically. The precarious nature of resettlement as a durable solution is an example of one of many global governance challenges that could be better managed by a network versus distinct institutions. It enhances coordination across agencies of different sectors involved and utilizes organizational strengths and resources in an efficacious manner.
Limitations and Future Directions

The mixed methods approach to the study has both benefits and limitations. For example, the use of face-to-face interviews makes it difficult to control the environment which may affect or bias interviews. Interviewers can control the focus of the interview through the line of questioning; however, the presence of the researcher may bias the responses of the subject in comparison to if the subject was freely discussing his/her opinions with a friend. The results and analysis of the responses from organizational representatives and government officials may have been affected by this limitation because only face-to-face interviews were conducted with these groups of participants.

Other issues encountered with the chosen methodology included difficulties conducting focus group sessions and problems with the comprehension of certain open-ended survey and interview questions. The use of focus groups proved futile for this study because it was difficult to engage participants in a comfortable discussion with each other. The participants individually answered the focus group questions one after the other, and instead of sparking conversation as initially anticipated, the participants provided similar responses to the first participant’s response despite the opinionated nature of the questions. Finally, the more outspoken participants tended to dominate the focus group sessions. Individual interviews could have fostered better insights and more in-depth responses from each participant.

Camp refugee participants also faced difficulties in comprehending one specific open-ended question that was used in both the surveys and interviews. As a result, my colleague and I omitted the question; however, it suggests the possibility of other
questions being misunderstood. This issue indicates that perhaps a more quantitative based methodology is more suitable for this particular population.

In refugee studies, researchers deal with unraveling “the nexus of motivations, expectations, and perceptions” (Van Arsdale, pers. comm., Oct. 1, 2012). The use of attitudinal and behavioral questions in both interviews and surveys in this study represented an attempt to illuminate refugee motivations, expectations, and perceptions, however, expectations proved the most difficult to unravel. This study found camp refugees to expect difficulties in the country of resettlement without language proficiency and resettled refugees to have unrealistic expectations of life in the U.S. prior to departure; however, it was difficult to assess the expectations of the camp refugees who were awaiting departure. A closed-ended question versus an open-ended question regarding refugees’ expectations of life in the U.S. may have been more appropriate for this population.

The exploratory nature of this study restricted the generalization of findings. Time and resource constraints limited the sample size used in the study, hampering the conclusiveness of the study’s results. Using thematic analysis, I coded the data based on recurring themes and then read over the data by codes to ensure the proper coding. Thematic analysis of the interviews consisted of my own interpretation of the data. A second interpretation of codes and themes could have strengthened the study through the identification of additional codes or themes I may have overlooked, minimizing possible misinterpretations of the data, and limiting any personal biases caused by the filtering of the data through my subjective lens.
I conducted chi-square tests to determine the relationship and significance between the variables analyzed. Thirty-four chi-square tests were conducted, but only three of the tests produced significant results. Younger refugees in the 18-24 year old age range were found to be more likely to attend English class in the camps than refugees in the older age ranges; highest level of education attained and attendance to English classes in Umphiem refugee camp were positively associated; and refugees that attended English classes in the refugee camp were found to be associated with higher levels of English proficiency. A larger sample size could have strengthened the study’s findings by improving the significance of a greater number of the tests performed. For example, the study sought to explore the relationships between the length of time in the U.S. and English proficiency level; however, the finding was insignificant so a conclusion could not be drawn. A larger sample size would also permit conducting regression analyses with categorical predictors to quantify the effect (if present) certain variables such as length of time in U.S., education levels, attendance to English class in the U.S. or camp, teacher ethnicity, and length of a language training program have on English proficiency levels. These findings would greatly enhance and inform programming for a language training class to prepare refugees in the best way possible. Time and resource constraints prevented a larger sample size because of the difficulties and delays in obtaining a refugee camp pass from the Thai Ministry of Interior to access the refugee population and the limited time available to conduct the field research in Thailand. The presence of Thai authorities constrained the number of interviews and surveys that could be conducted because overnight visits were prohibited and visitors were required to leave by three in
the afternoon. Given the geographic terrain of the area and the remoteness of the camps, it was difficult to access the camps repeatedly. Our accessibility to the refugee camps also depended on unforeseen events and was depended on the availability of our gatekeeper and translator. For example, my colleague and I were only able to access Umphiem refugee camp for one full day because of the heightened security due to the fire which burned down one section of the camp; also our access to the camp depended on the availability of our gatekeeper and translator, which was imperative for being granted entrance into the camp.

Despite these limitations, this study serves as a jumping point for further research into target language training at the refugee camp level to improve prospects for long-term resettlement, a growing global governance challenge. A future study that could be conducted to produce more conclusive results could be longitudinal with a larger sample size. The study could track refugees’ English proficiency levels and ability to integrate (based on the Integration Working Group’s indicators) at key points in time starting from the refugee camp and concluding after the refugee has lived in the country of resettlement for a few years. Target language proficiency levels and ability to integrate could be compared between refugees who do and do not attend an extensive target language training program in the camps. Variables such as highest level of education attained and age should be controlled given the findings from this study. Higher education levels indicated higher English proficiency levels and the refugees in the 18-24 year old age group tended to have higher English proficiency levels as well. Still, these findings will be able to inform best practices or even play a role in norm setting in regards to making
resettlement a long-term success. Furthermore, these findings could reform the resettlement policies of receiving countries to better meet the needs of refugees and local receiving communities.

This study skimmed the surface of the use of global public policy networks as a possible way to abate the global governance issue this study addresses. Global public policy networks transpire based on a multi-sector demand and interest to rectify a problem, such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines whose global network led a successful media campaign to raise awareness of the problem and move toward its resolution (Reinicke and Deng 2000). However, ‘global public policy networks’ represent an inchoate field the UN has yet to harness. The UN can play a variety of roles in global public policy networks, including acting as a norm entrepreneur in the area of refugee protection and durable solutions. The UN has already done this in other areas such as development. For example, UNICEF and UNDP reshaped discourse and the framework on development with the annual Human Development Report. Additionally, UNICEF has used its global network to promote children’s rights issues and raise awareness and action against child soldiers. There is room for UNHCR to increase organizational and donor awareness on the issues refugees encounter with resettlement to encourage more resources to be allocated towards preparing refugees to ensure long-term resettlement success. This issue is vital in light of UNHCR’s desire to expand resettlement to be a solution for more of the world’s seven million refugees in protracted refugee situations.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

The notion regarding the incoherence of the refugee regime (Loescher and Milner, 2011) undergirds this study by manifesting the inability of states to meet the needs of the refugees as demonstrated through the lack of upstream, preparatory target language classes, and downstream, long-term resettlement success, linkages. The debate over whether refugee protection should adopt a state centered framework versus a framework centered on the needs of the refugees continues. The agenda of refugee protection issues is dominated by the political interests of powerful states while long running refugee protection issues, such as capacity-building issues of protracted refugee situations, remain low on the agenda; this disconnect highlights the incoherence of the refugee regime. This study explored the possibilities of implementing a formalized English language training program in the refugee camps to address the global challenge of making resettlement truly a durable solution. Prior studies indicate the lack of attention and resources dedicated to ensuring the successful integration of resettled refugees and hence achieving a durable solution for the refugees. Studies also indicate the struggles resettled refugees face to achieve self-sufficiency even after three to four years of living in the receiving country because of unemployment and lack of access to key services, which point to the underlying issue of lack of target language proficiency. This issue is important because there are over seven million refugees in a protracted refugee situation awaiting a durable solution. There are a limited number of durable solutions offered to refugees – voluntary
repatriation, local integration, and resettlement – however, resettlement is the only viable option for many of the world’s refugees. There is a need to strategically leverage resettlement to its upmost potential in order to provide a durable solution to a greater number of refugees because there are currently only twenty-two receiving countries participating in the resettlement process, the majority of which are developed nations. However, resettlement can be a strain on state systems because states must provide a multitude of supportive services, such as cash assistance, medical care, employment services, and language classes, to the newcomers for an adequate period of time to help them achieve self-sufficiency; in addition, some receiving societies are unwelcoming of refugees. These obligations could deter potential receiving countries that are less able to deal with the financial and social burden of resettlement on their state systems, which is why this study seeks to ensure the long-term resettlement success of refugees by determining the possibilities of preparing refugees before resettlement through language training.

Language classes in the camps are beneficial for refugees who opt for resettlement and receiving countries. Prior studies indicate the difficulties recent refugee flows have experienced in integrating and achieving self-sufficiency because of their lack of English proficiency. Factors such as transportation, expensive childcare, and emphasis on quick employment constrain refugees from language classes and their path towards integration. Additionally, higher proficiency levels are associated with employment, which indicates the importance of language proficiency for building refugee capacity and enabling refugees towards achieving self-sufficiency. Language classes in the camps are
also potentially beneficial for the resettlement agencies that aid refugees upon arrival in the U.S. Additional preparation through language classes would shift some of the burden from the often underfunded resettlement agencies because increased language proficiency has the potential to enhance the refugees’ individual coping mechanisms and capability to become more self-reliant. This study has found that even a beginner level of English proficiency goes a long way, such as when an organizational representative described a resettled refugee’s success in obtaining employment after repeatedly saying “I want to have a job” versus completely relying on the resettlement agency for help.

The study found lack of motivation to be a major barrier for refugees and service providers. Refugees expressed lack of motivation as a barrier to attending classes whereas service providers like the IRC and IOM expressed difficulties in providing cultural orientation classes to refugees. This entrenched lack of motivation, which I attribute to many years of dependency, may explain why service providers and refugees agree standardized English classes in the camps are a good idea before resettlement. The study also found a need for English classes in the camps prior to resettlement as supported by the low levels of English proficiency among camp refugees and their belief and recognition that English is important to learn before resettlement. The camp refugees believe classes should be mandatory, with the reason that refugees are lazy according to some of the refugees interviewed. The majority of the organizational representatives believe classes should be optional because requiring classes could possibly alter the nature of the U.S. resettlement program which is inherently humanitarian in nature; other organizational representatives, on the other hand, believe classes should be mandatory.
because it is the obligation of the receiving states to prepare refugees and results will be more optimal if classes are mandated. Resettled refugees unanimously stated English classes should be mandatory because of the hardships and barriers they face with low English proficiency levels in the U.S. Higher English proficiency levels enable refugees to access jobs and key services like healthcare, and preparation in the camp versus in the receiving country is seen as beneficial to the resettled refugees because they face barriers in accessing English classes in the receiving country. Expensive transportation fees, lack of transportation, unaffordable childcare, high fees, and work schedules are some factors which prevent refugees from attending English classes in the U.S.

This study also demonstrated higher English proficiency levels among resettled refugees who attended English classes in the camps. Although the higher proficiency levels among the resettled refugees may have been associated with higher education levels attained, this study found classes implemented in the camps prior to resettlement to be more beneficial. There are fewer barriers in the camp to accessing classes and the barriers are easier to address in comparison to the institutionally entrenched barriers refugees face in the U.S. However, despite the benefits of implementing classes in preparation for resettlement, the study found lack of financial and human resources as the major deterrence to the possible implementation of a standardized language program in the camps. Donor fatigue in a protracted refugee situation with a mass resettlement program in place combined with shifting funding priorities given the recent positive reforms inside Burma have contributed to the scarce funding available for the refugee situation along the Thai-Burma border. According to the World Education representative,
donors have reduced funding because they believe fewer resources are needed in a camp where a mass resettlement program is in place, despite the unwieldy unregistered population and steady flow of new entrants to the camps. Additionally, the European Union and ZOA have shifted their priorities to inside Burma given the possibility voluntary repatriation becomes an option for a durable solution. Given these complex operational factors, there is a need for the use of the global public policy network approach for the purposes of agenda setting and negotiating language training to ensure the durability of resettlement as a global standard. The organizations along the Thai-Burma border along with those participating in the CCSDPT network could more effectively and efficiently address specific issues if additional and close-working partnerships were formed with businesses and civil society. The business sector could bring its financial resources to complement the voluntary energy of civil society, rule-enforcing ability of governments, and capacity-building and convening skills of international organizations.

These findings are important because they reflect the complexity and obstacles to implementing a language training program in the camps. It demonstrates the great need and political will among organizations to better prepare refugees before resettlement as indicated through the interviews and surveys, however, a nontraditional approach using the idea of global public policy networks is necessary to address this pertinent global issue. The findings of this study are based on the specific refugee context along the Thai-Burma border; however, they also provide important implications for other protracted refugee situations. The results can be applied beyond this context to other protracted
refugee situations where a mass resettlement program is in place as the main durable solution for the refugees. Since this study’s results are focused on the U.S. as the receiving country, the findings may be applied to other refugee situations that have a resettlement program that takes a similar approach to the U.S. in prioritizing early employment.

This study’s findings are most applicable to refugee populations that have low literacy rates, lack of exposure to the West, or whose native language is vastly different from English. For instance, a language program was found to be particularly vital for the refugee population from Burma because of their illiteracy, low levels of education, and lack of exposure to the West which heightened the difficulty of achieving self-sufficiency in the U.S. in comparison to a refugee that is well-educated and regularly exposed to Western culture.

Based on this study, beginning language training classes in the camps is advantageous because of higher levels of eventual English proficiency and the possibility to mitigate or prevent future problems in the country of resettlement. I suggest the following recommendations. A standardized language training program should be implemented in the refugee camps to benefit both refugees who opt for resettlement and the receiving country for refugee situations with the following similar circumstances: a) protracted refugee situation, b) long running resettlement program to the U.S. or a receiving country with a similar resettlement policy, and c) refugee population with low literacy levels or little exposure to the West. The standardized language training program should be optional but highly encouraged and aimed at targeting refugees over 24 years
old that plan to resettle given the finding that younger refugees were found more likely to attend classes and had access to a greater number of English programs. The program should be conducted after refugees receive notice of acceptance to a third country, allowing at least six months of language training prior to departure. A widespread information campaign about the importance of learning the target language of the receiving country prior to departure and details about the language training program should be implemented to ensure higher motivation and awareness levels regarding classes. Services such as childcare should be offered to ensure adults with young children can easily access classes and classes should be offered multiple times a day to maximize attendance and the benefits refugees and receiving countries gain from attending a language training program. Not only will a language training program in the camp build the capacities of the refugees for their long-term resettlement success, the actors engaged in the resettlement process will exercise greater burden sharing of responsibilities for this global governance challenge.

Although the findings of this exploratory study are limited, it is valuable because it can serve as a jump off point for future studies. There is a wealth of literature on the issues of language acquisition in the countries of resettlement, but there is a gap in studies being conducted in the host country or refugee camps to explore permanent solutions to preparing refugees for long-term resettlement success. Future studies delving into the network approach specifically in relation to improving the durability of resettlement would be beneficial in improving the coherence of the refugee regime as well as potentially facilitating how best to burden-share among nations and secure a permanent
solution for more of the world’s seven million refugees in protracted situations awaiting their futures. Implementing standardized language training classes in the camps to prepare refugees for resettlement represents a solution that the evolving refugee regime must strive to adopt to ensure the long-term resettlement success of refugees and to shape the refugee protection regime as a human rights framework centered on the needs of the refugees.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Survey for Camp Refugees

Consent Form Code: __________

1. What is your age?
   _____ 18-24  25-30  31-35  36-40  41-50  50-64  65+

2. What is your ethnicity?
   Pow Karen  Segaw Karen  Karenni  Other: __________________

3. How many children do you have?
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   10+

4. What was your job in Burma?
   Farmer/Agricultural  Teacher  Shop Keeper  Student  Child
   Unemployed  Other:______________________________

5. Where were you born?
   Burma  Thailand  Camp

6. What year did you leave Burma?
   _______________
   Describe ____________________________________________________________________________

7. Why did you leave Burma?
   Lack of Opportunity  Oppression by Military: _________________________
   To Go To School
   Other:___________________________________________________________________________

8. Would you please rate your English language proficiency level?
   None  Limited  Intermediate  Proficient
   Interviewer rating:
   None  Limited  Intermediate  Proficient

9. If given a choice, do you want to:
   Return to Burma  Live in Thailand  Resettle to a Third Country
   Other ______________________________________________________________
   If answered “Return to Burma”...
   a. Why do you want to return?
      Homesick  Desire to Help Community  Reunite with Family
      Other:_________________________________________________________________________
   b. If peace occurred in Burma, how would you return?
      On Your Own  Sponsored by UNHCR
      Other:__________________________________________________________
   If answered “Live to Thailand”...
   a. Why do you want to live in Thailand?
Job Opportunities          Education Opportunities

Haven’t Known Anything Else  Other: ____________________

If answered “Return” or “Live in Thailand”…
 a. Why don’t you want to resettle?
    It Would Be Hard          My Family Is In Thailand/Burma
    I Want to Return Home     Other:________________________

If answered “Resettle to a Third Country”…
 a. Why do you want to resettle?
    Reunite with Family          Education Opportunities
    Children’s Future          Job Opportunities

   Other Hopes: ________________________________

   b. What are your fears about resettlement?
      English          Finding a Job          Separation from Family
      Other: ________________________________

10. Do you have any family members who have resettled?
    Yes          No
    If YES…
 a. How many family members have resettled?
    ______
 b. What countries have they resettled to?
    United States          Australia          Other: _________________
 c. How often do you talk to them?
    Weekly          Monthly          Bi-Monthly          Yearly          Other: ______
 d. What advice have they given you about resettlement?
    None          Learn English          Vocational Skills
    Other: ________________________________
 e. Do you think it is important that you learn English for a longer period of time before resettled?
    Yes          No
 f. After speaking with them, do you see resettlement in a positive light or negative light?
    Positive          Negative          Neutral

11. Which registration card or IDs do or did you have?
    None          UN          PAB          TBBC          Other: ________________
                  10 year ID          Burmese ID          Thai ID

12. Have you owned a UN registration card in the past but not presently?
Yes  No
If YES...
  a. Why did you give it away?
     Did Not Want to Resettle  Friend Needed It More Than Me
     Needed the Money  Changed Mind
     Other: ___________________

13. Have you applied for resettlement?
   Yes  No
If YES...
   a. Do you think English is important to learn before resettlement?
      Yes  No
      →If YES...
      i. Why is English important to learn prior to resettlement?
         For Educational/Job Opportunities  To Integrate Well
         Universal Language  Other:____________________
      →If NO...
      ii. Why not?
         Can Survive in Burmese Community  Will Learn When I Get There
         Other:____________________

14. Do you want to learn English?
   Yes  No
If YES...
   a. Why do you want to learn English?
      Education Opportunities  Employment Opportunities
      Universal Language  Other:____________________
   If NO...
   b. Why don’t you want to learn English?
      Not Necessary  Too Difficult to Learn  No Classes
      No teachers  Other:____________________

15. Are English classes offered in this camp?
   Yes  No
If YES...
   a. With what organization?
      School Name: __________________________
      Organization Name: ____________________
   b. How often are the classes offered? And how long are the classes?
      __________________________
   c. What ethnicity are the English teachers?
      Burmese Minority (Karen/Karenni)  Thai
      Native English Speaker  Other: ___________________
   d. What is the salary of the English teachers?

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16. Do you attend English classes?
   Yes         No

   If YES...
   a. How beneficial were/are the classes?
      Not Beneficial at All  Little Beneficial  Neutral
      Somewhat Beneficial   Very Beneficial

   b. Do you feel confident in your language ability/to speak English?
      Yes         No

      If YES...
      i. Why?
         ______________________________________________________
         ______________________________________________________
         ____________________________________________________

      If NO...
      ii. Why not?
         Did Not Learn Enough  Do Not Speak Well
         Other: ___________________________

   If NO...
   b. Why not?
      Childcare  Money  No Desire  No Time  Job  Too Far Away
      Other: _____________________________________________

   c. Do you have time to attend English classes given your daily schedule and activities?
      Yes         No

17. Would you have time to attend English classes 3 times per week?
   Yes         No

18. When would be the best time to offer English classes?
   Early Morning Before School/Work  Morning (9am-12pm)
   Weekends  Afternoon (12pm-5pm)  Evening: 5pm onward
   Other: ____________________________________________

19. Would you go to English classes if they were optional and offered at a time you had free time?
   Yes         No

20. Do you think it is a good idea to offer English classes in the camp before resettlement?
   Yes         No

   Why? _____________________________________________________
21. Do you think it is a good idea for refugees who are resettling to be *required* to learn English?
   Yes     No
   Why? __________________________________________________

22. What training should people receive?
   None          English      Vocational       GED
   I don’t know   Other:_________________________
APPENDIX B

Survey for Resettled Refugees

Today’s Date _______ Consent Form Code:_______

Gender______

1. Age_____
   18-24  25-30  31-35  36-40  41-50  51-64  65+

2. Ethnicity
   Po Karen  Segaw Karen  Karenni  Shan  Arakan  Muslim  Burman

3. What is your highest level of education? _______________________

4. What year did you leave Burma? _______________________

5. What refugee camp did you live in? __________________________

6. How many children do you have? What are their ages?
   _____ Children  Ages____________________________

7. Why did you leave Burma?
   Lack of Opportunity  Oppression by Military:_____________________
                        Education  Other:_____________________________________

8. What was your job in Burma?
   Farmer/Agricultural  Teacher  Shop Keeper  Student  Child
                        Unemployed  Other____________________________________

9. What year did you resettle to the USA?  Year_____

10. Did you have family or friends in Denver that help prepare you for resettlement?
    Yes    No

11. What was your primary reason for resettling?
    Reunite with Family  Educ.  Job Opportunities  Hardship of Camp Life
                                Child Educ.  Other:____________________________________
12. Do you work now?
   a. Yes
   b. No

13. If yes to 12, where? How long?

   Where________________________________________
   How long________

14. Please rate your English proficiency

   None          Little          Intermediate          Proficient

15. Did you learn English in the refugee camps?
   a. Yes
   b. No

16. If yes to 15, with what organization, how many years, how many hours a week, & rate the service

   Organization________________________________________
   How long________________________________________
   Hours per week________________________________________
   Rate effectiveness (scale of 1-5):
   Not beneficial          Little beneficial          Neutral          Somewhat          Very

17. Do you take English classes in Denver?
   a. Yes
   b. No

18. If yes, where and how long and how effective?

   Where________________________________________
   How long________________________________________
   Hours per week________________________________________
   Rate effectiveness (scale of 1-5):
   Not beneficial          Little beneficial          Neutral          Somewhat          Very

19. If no, why not?

   Childcare          Job          No money          No Desire          Too far away

   Other _________________
20. Do you wish English classes were required in the refugee camps?
   
   c. Yes
   d. No

21. If yes to 20, why do you think it is a good idea to offer English classes in the camp before resettlement?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

22. If yes to 20:

   How many months __________________________
   How many times/week _______________________
   How many hours a day ______________________

   Time:
   Early Morning before school/work               Morning (9am-12pm)
   Afternoon (12pm-5pm)                           Evening (5pm onward)
   Weekends

23. Please rate the effectiveness of your cultural orientation in Thailand (scale of 1-5)?

   Not beneficial    Little beneficial    Neutral    Somewhat    Very

24. What topics were covered in CO?

   **In Thailand**                  **In USA**                  
   a. Travel                        a. Travel
   b. Role of the Resettlement Agency b. Role of the Resettlement Agency
   c. Housing                       c. Housing
   d. Employment                    d. Employment
   e. Transportation                e. Transportation
   f. Education                     f. Education
   g. Health                        g. Health
   h. Money Management              h. Money Management
   i. Rights and Responsibilities    i. Rights and Responsibilities
   j. Community Services            j. Community Services
   k. Cultural Adjustment           k. Cultural Adjustment
   l. Other ________________________ l. Other ________________________
   m. All                           m. All
25. What topics did you find to be most important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Thailand</th>
<th>In USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Travel</td>
<td>a. Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Role of the Resettlement Agency</td>
<td>b. Role of the Resettlement Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Housing</td>
<td>c. Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Employment</td>
<td>d. Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Transportation</td>
<td>e. Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Education</td>
<td>f. Education</td>
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<td>g. Health</td>
<td>g. Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Money Management</td>
<td>h. Money Management</td>
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<td>i. Rights and Responsibilities</td>
<td>i. Rights and Responsibilities</td>
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<td>j. Community Services</td>
<td>j. Community Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>k. Cultural Adjustment</td>
<td>k. Cultural Adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Other____________</td>
<td>l. Other__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. All</td>
<td>m. All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. Which topics were most useful for your transition and adjustment to life in the USA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Thailand</th>
<th>In USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Travel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Role of the Resettlement Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Housing</td>
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<td>d. Employment</td>
<td>d. Employment</td>
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<td>e. Transportation</td>
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<td>f. Education</td>
<td>f. Education</td>
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<td>g. Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>k. Cultural Adjustment</td>
<td>k. Cultural Adjustment</td>
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<tr>
<td>l. Other____________</td>
<td>l. Other__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. All</td>
<td>m. All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. Before you took CO, what were your expectations of life in America?

Describe: _____________________________________________________

28. After taking CO, were your expectations of life in America changed?

Yes  No

29. Now that you have lived in the USA, what is different about your life now than what you expected?

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Yes  No

Description: _______________________________________________________

30. Now that you have lived in the USA for ___ months / years, what topics did you wish were covered or focused on more (to better meet your needs)?

31. In order to help a refugee’s transition to life in America, what training should people receive before resettlement in the US?

None  English  Vocational  GED  I don’t know

Other______________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

Interview Questions for Refugees

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity (If Karen: Po, Sgaw, etc)?
3. If you have children, how many children do you have?
4. What camp did you live in? For how many years?
5. Choose one. Do you want to:
   a. remain in camp,
   b. integrate into a Thai city or community,
   c. return to Burma,
   d. or be resettled?
   e. Why?
6. If you want to be resettled, where do you want to resettle?
7. How do you think your life will change after resettlement?
8. What was your job in your village in Burma?
9. Do you have a job now? If yes, what is it?
10. Describe your daily activities (your life in the camp).
11. How well do you speak English?
   a. limited proficiency
   b. intermediate proficiency
   c. proficient
12. Did you attend English lessons in the camps?
13. If no to #12, why not? Why didn’t you attend English classes?
14. If yes to #12:
   a. Where?
   b. When?
   c. How often were classes held? How long did each class last? How long did the entire course last?
   d. Were your teachers native English speakers?
   e. With what organization?
15. If yes to #12, what other English programs were available to you and why did you choose this one?
16. Please tell us more about your experience with English classes in the camps?
17. Do you think learning English is important? If yes, why? If no, why not?
18. Imagine English lessons were required by the UNHCR prior to resettlement. Do you think it is a good idea? Why or why not? Would you go?
19. What do you think would be the most helpful information or training to receive before being resettled?
20. Have any of your friends or family resettled? How was their transition from camp life to the third country? Have they given you any advice to prepare for resettlement?
21. If you are planning or thinking about resettlement, have you had contact with IRC, IOM, or UNHCR? Have they been helpful?

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APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for Organizational Representatives

Government

USG DOS Regional Refugee Coordinator
1. What is your role as a refugee coordinator?
2. What are the key needs and challenges in the camps now and do you perceive to be in the future? What are the USG’s greatest priorities for this population?
3. How do you perceive or how have funding priorities and USG strategy shifted given recent changes?
4. What does the USG see as the durable solution(s) for the refugees along the Thai-Burma border in light of the recent changes in Burma?
5. What is your assessment of the livelihoods of resettled refugees in the US and is that a priority for State in terms of funding certain programs over others?
6. I am aware that USG funds IRC for CO. Have there been thoughts or discussions about expanding CO to make resettlement a more durable solution and to better prepare the refugees?
7. How long do you think resettlement will continue?
8. What do you perceive as RTG’s view on resettlement given the recent changes? What does RTG see as the future of the refugees and how is this affecting USG policy and strategy?
9. In the refugee resettlement debate, some key players see the need to equip and prepare refugees before they resettle. Others see the responsibility on the host government after resettlement. What is the USG’s stance?
10. From my experience with the resettled refugees from Burma, resettlement has not been a durable solution as they have not been given enough preparation prior to resettlement to achieve self-sufficiency in an appropriate amount of time. How would you make resettlement a more durable solution for the refugees from Burma? How would you strengthen resettlement as one of the options for durable solutions?
11. What have been the lessons learned with resettlement for this population, if any?

International Organizations

UNHCR

1. What is your role in UNHCR? What has been your experience in the refugee camps?
2. What do you and/or UNHCR see as the durable solution for the refugees along the Thai/Burma border in light of the recent changes going on in Burma?
3. How do you prioritize needs in light of funding?
4. What are the key needs in refugee camps currently and also what do you perceive the needs to be in the future? How will UNHCR’s role evolve to continue to meet refugees’ needs?
1. What is your role in IOM?
2. Can you tell us more specifically about the process from the Myanmar refugees being in camp to arriving in the US?
3. Does IOM have a role once they arrive in the host country? How long does this process take from beginning to end?
4. Can you expound upon cultural orientation? How was it drafted for this population?
5. Why did they transfer to IRC?
6. History of cultural orientation. How has it evolved into its current form today? How was it molded to fit this population? What have you seen as the lessons learned and best practices for cultural orientation?
7. How is it different from IRC’s cultural orientation?
8. Have the refugees themselves been a stakeholder in the decision-making process?
9. We have read about a 3-4 week language training for these refugees. Can you expound upon this program?
10. Age group? What was your opinion on its effectiveness? What do you perceive was the level of proficiency of English was after the course? Is there any data following them upon resettlement pre and post course? Why did it end?
11. How do you prioritize needs in light of funding?
12. What are IOM’s greatest priorities for this population? (Also ask about family unification. When can it occur? How? Etc?)
13. What is your assessment of the livelihoods of resettled refugees in the US and is that a priority for IOM particularly for people from Myanmar?
14. What is your opinion on English language training prior to resettlement? What do you perceive as the challenges and benefits? If it were more mandated, who would be involved in that process and which organization would take the lead?
15. How would you personally improve the resettlement process?

Non-governmental Organizations

Karen Refugee Camp Education Entity
1. What is the role of KRCEE and KED in the camps?
2. What is your role in KRCEE and KED?
3. What organizations in the camps provide English education to the refugees in the camps?
4. What are the priorities of KRCEE and KED in camp?
5. Is resettlement a factor or priority in the service provision? Why or why not?
6. What barriers do you face in providing education in camps?
7. What are some lessons learned for the organizations involved in the provision of English language training in camp?
8. Would you recommend mandating English training prior to resettlement? Why or why not?
9. What recommendations (best practices) would you make for English language provision in camp?
   a. Recommendations for policy?
   b. Recommendations for the service provision?
   c. Recommendations for content and programming?

World Education
1. How many Thai camps does World Education operate in?
2. How long has World Education worked in the refugee camps?
3. How long have you personally worked with World Education or in another capacity with refugees from Burma?
4. What is the role of World Education in providing English training to the refugees in the camps?
5. What specific services do you offer for English training?
6. What are WE’s priorities for English language provision in camp and outside camp?
7. Is resettlement a factor or a priority in the service provision? Why or why not?
8. How often do you offer English lessons?
9. Who (gender, age) attends 10-month residential program?
10. What barriers or challenges do you face in providing English lessons to refugees in the camps?
11. What challenges does WE as an organization faces in providing services?
12. Where are the English teachers from? Is English their first or second language?
13. On average, how long do English teachers stay with WE? What is their compensation?
14. Would you recommend mandating English prior to resettlement?
15. So if they made those programs that you had before mandatory and standardized; disadvantages and advantages?
16. Would u support the requirement for that type of program for those who have already applied for resettlement?
17. Do you remember how much it costs or how much resources were needed to run the ORSP program?
18. What do you see as the future of refugees right now?
19. What are the key needs in refugee camps?
20. Approximately how many refugees to be resettled?

ZOA Refugee Care
1. How many Thai camps does ZOA operate in?
2. How long has ZOA worked in the refugee camps?
3. How long have you personally worked with ZOA or in another capacity with refugees from Burma?
4. What is the role of ZOA in providing English training to the refugees in the camps?
5. What specific services do you offer for English training?
6. What are ZOA’s priorities for English language provision in camp?
7. Is resettlement a factor or a priority in the service provision? Why or why not?
8. How often do you offer English lessons?
9. Who (gender, age) attends English lessons?
10. And for how long, on average, does each refugee attend English classes?
11. What barriers or challenges do you face in providing English lessons to refugees in the camps?
12. What barriers do you perceive refugees have in accessing English classes in the camps?
13. Where are the English teachers from? Is English their first or second language?
14. What is their compensation?
15. On average, how long do English teachers stay with WE?
16. What is your assessment of English language training, as a whole, inside of the camps – including services provided by other NGOs?
17. Would you recommend mandating English training prior to resettlement? Why or why not?
18. What do you see as the perceived advantages or disadvantages of implementing standardized and mandatory English lessons in the camps or outside of them prior to resettlement?
19. Would you support the requirement of English classes in the camps of refugees who opt for third-country resettlement?
20. What are some lessons learned for WE in the provision of English language training in camp?
21. What recommendations (best practices) would you suggest for English language provision in camp? Recommendations for the service provision? Recommendations for content and programming?
22. What are the key needs in the refugee camps?
23. How would you improve the resettlement process?
APPENDIX E

Focus Group Questions

Focus Group – NFE STUDENTS
1. What is the greatest benefit of NFE classes?
2. Experience with English before NFE class?
3. Greatest challenges of NFE classes?
4. Do you plan to resettle to a third country or return to Burma or stay here?
5. How would you improve NFE?
6. Perception on mandating English?
7. What are your expectations of resettlement?
8. How would you design a NFE program?

Focus Group – NFE TEACHERS
1. How would you improve the NFE program or content or curriculum?
2. What are the biggest challenges you face in teaching English?
3. Can you tell us more about NFE school.
4. How do you recruit your students each year?
5. What do you see as pros and cons to the resettlement process?
6. How would you improve the resettlement process?
7. Do you think they should only provide compulsory English classes or also CO?
8. Should English classes be mandated? And for how long? And who should run?
9. Do you attend training?
10. Are the lesson plans geared toward resettlement at all or just learning English?
APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Forms

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – Camp Refugees

ATTACHMENT B

Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training
You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to build the capacity of refugees at the camp level prior to resettlement. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of our thesis. The study is conducted by Lorelle Yuen and Erin Kesler. Results will be used to influence policy and fund allocation and will also be used to complete thesis work. Lorelle Yuen can be reached at 919-520-6298 or lorelle@ymail.com and Erin Kesler can be reached at 865-804-2545 or kesler.erin@gmail.com. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Tim Sisk, Department, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303-871-2998, timothy.sisk@du.edu). Participation in this study should take no more than 90 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 15 questions about your daily activities, English proficiency, and access to English lessons in the refugee camp. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050 or write to either at durb@du.edu or the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____________________ Date __________________

___ I agree to be audiotaped.
___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____________________ Date __________________

I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM – Resettled Refugees

ATTACHMENT B2

Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training
You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to build the capacity of refugees at the camp level prior to resettlement. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of our thesis. The study is conducted by Lorelle Yuen and Erin Kesler. Results will be used to influence policy and fund allocation and will also be used to complete thesis work. Lorelle Yuen can be reached at 919-520-6298 or lorelley@gmail.com and Erin Kesler can be reached at 865-804-2545 or kesler.erin@gmail.com. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Tim Sisk, Department, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303-871-4531, timothy.sisk@du.edu).

Participation in this study should take no more than 90 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 28 questions about your decision to resettled, English proficiency, access to English lessons in the US and refugee camp, and cultural orientation in the refugee camp. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050 or write to either at durb@du.edu or the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________

___ I agree to be audiotaped.
___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________

___________ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM – NGO Representatives

ATTACHMENT C

Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training
You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to build the capacity of refugees at the camp level prior to resettlement. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of our thesis. The study is conducted by Lorelle Yuen and Erin Kesler. Results will be used to influence policy and fund allocation and will also be used to complete thesis work. Lorelle Yuen can be reached at 919-520-6298 or lorelley@gmail.com and Erin Kesler can be reached at 865-804-2545 or kesler.erin@gmail.com. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Tim Sisk, Department, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303-871-2998, timothy.sisk@du.edu).

Participation in this study should take no more than 90 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 14 questions about your organization’s operation in the camps, barriers faced in provisioning English lessons in the camps, and your opinion on requiring English lessons in the camps. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050 or write to either at duirb@du.edu or the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________

___ I agree to be audiotaped.
___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________

________________________ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM – International Organization Representatives
ATTACHMENT D

Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training

You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to build the capacity of refugees at the camp level prior to resettlement. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of our thesis. The study is conducted by Lorelle Yuen and Erin Kesler. Results will be used to influence policy and fund allocation and will also be used to complete thesis work. Lorelle Yuen can be reached at 919-520-6298 or lorelley@gmail.com and Erin Kesler can be reached at 865-804-2545 or kesler.erin@gmail.com. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Tim Sisk, Department, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303-871-4531, timothy.sisk@du.edu).

Participation in this study should take no longer than 90 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 14 questions about resettlement, cultural orientation, key needs in the refugee camps, and the advantages and disadvantages to providing mandatory English lessons in the camps. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050 or write to either at durb@du.edu or the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____________________ Date ___________________

___ I agree to be audiotaped.
___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____________________ Date ___________________

________ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM – Government Official
ATTACHMENT E

Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training
You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to build the capacity of refugees at the camp level prior to resettlement. In addition, this study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of our thesis. The study is conducted by Lorelle Yuen and Erin Kesler. Results will be used to influence policy and fund allocation and will also be used to complete thesis work. Lorelle Yuen can be reached at 919-520-6298 or lorelley@gmail.com and Erin Kesler can be reached at 865-804-2545 or kesler.erin@gmail.com. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Tim Sisk, Department, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303-871-2998, timothy.sisk@du.edu).
Participation in this study should take no more than 90 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 7 questions about resettlement, your organization’s role in the refugee camps, lessons learned, and recommendations for better service provision in terms of providing mandatory English classes in the camps. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.
If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050 or write to either at du-irb@du.edu or the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.
You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________

___ I agree to be audiotaped.
___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____________________ Date _________________

I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM - Focus Group

ATTACHMENT F

Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training
You are invited to participate in a focus group that seeks to study capacity building of refugees through English training at the camp level prior to resettlement. In addition, this focus group is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of our thesis. The focus group is conducted by Lorelle Yuen and Erin Kesler. Results will be used to influence policy and fund allocation and will also be used to complete thesis work. Lorelle Yuen can be reached at 919-520-6298 or lorelley@gmail.com and Erin Kesler can be reached at 865-804-2545 or kesler.erin@gmail.com. This project is supervised by the course instructor, Dr. Tim Sisk, Department, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208, (303-871-2998, timothy.sisk@du.edu).

Participation in this focus group should take about 90 minutes of your time. Participation will involve discussing and responding to 6 questions about your experience with English training in the camps, your barriers to English training, and your recommendations for improved English training service provision or providing mandatory English classes in the camps along with five other voluntary participants.

Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may leave the focus group at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any focus group questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Although the researchers will hold your responses confidentially, we cannot guarantee that others in the focus group will. Only the researchers will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study or focus group will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study or focus group be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Paul Olk, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-4531, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4050 or write to either at du-irb@du.edu or the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign the next page if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called “Capacity-Building at the Camp Level through English Training.” I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this focus group, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature _____________________ Date __________________

___ I agree to be audiotaped.
___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____________________ Date __________________

____________________________ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address: