

Onondaga Citizens League  
2012 Study Committee Notes—Meeting on October 9, 2012  
Meeting held at PEC, 620 James St., Syracuse

Attendees: Mark Cass, Felicia Castricone, Helen Malina, Nancy McCarty, Sarah McIlvain, Julie Petrie, Paul Predmore, Jonnell Robinson, Amanda Roth, Peter Sarver, Lois Schroeder, Nancy Shepard, Lisa Warnecke  
Co-chairs: Kristen Heath & Heidi Holtz  
OCL: Sandra Barrett & Becky Sernett

OCL Study Committee Schedule  
The study committee schedule for October will be as follows:  
Thursday, Oct. 25 at 12 Noon—PEC, 620 James St.

Future Events  
“The Storytelling Class” film showing—On October 30 at 7 p.m., the last of the films in “The World at Our Doorstep” film series will be shown at Progressive Expert Consulting’s (PEC) Inspiration Hall (formerly St. Peter’s Church), located at the corner of James and Catherine streets in Syracuse. The film showing is free and open to the public.

Meeting Summary  
The study committee reviewed an analysis of the previous meeting’s brainstorming session. The analysis was conducted by Sarah Walton, an intern at Syracuse University who is working with Jonnell Allen, an assistant professor of geography. The charts from this analysis are included in the notes below.

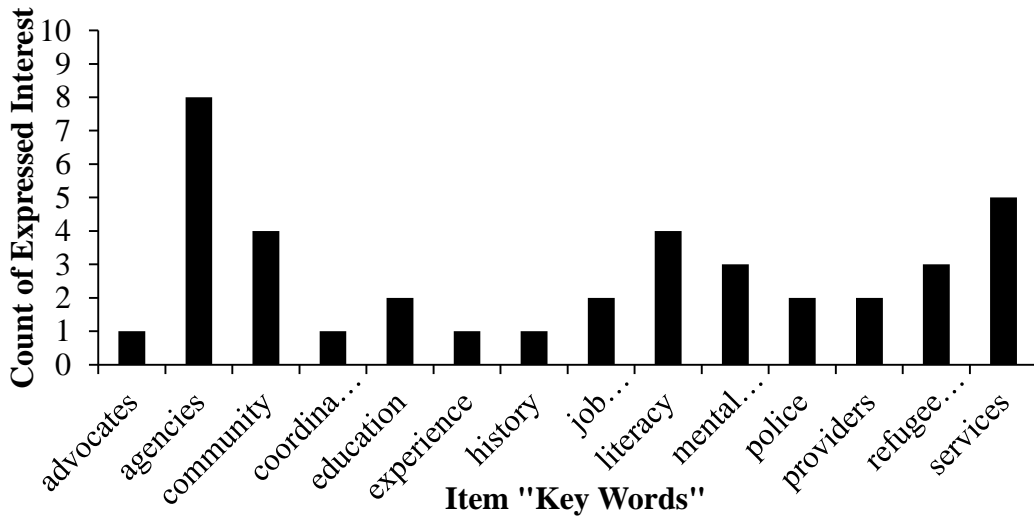
Brainstorming Session Analysis  
At the previous meeting, study committee members were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What have we learned? What has emerged?
- What are the successes or particular competencies for refugee resettlement in our area?
- What opportunities could we pursue?
- What did this study miss that could be studied further?

Allen introduced the analysis by saying the results aren’t an “exact science.” There are two reasons: First, respondents had their own subjective way of interpreting a question, and, second, the results were dependent on who attended the brainstorming session. To collect more information and increase the number of respondents, the survey will be sent out to the OCL listserv.

Allen also cautioned the group that she hasn’t had time to review the narrative accompanied each chart, and so the committee should focus its attention on the data reflected in the charts. For this reason, only the charts will be included in the notes.

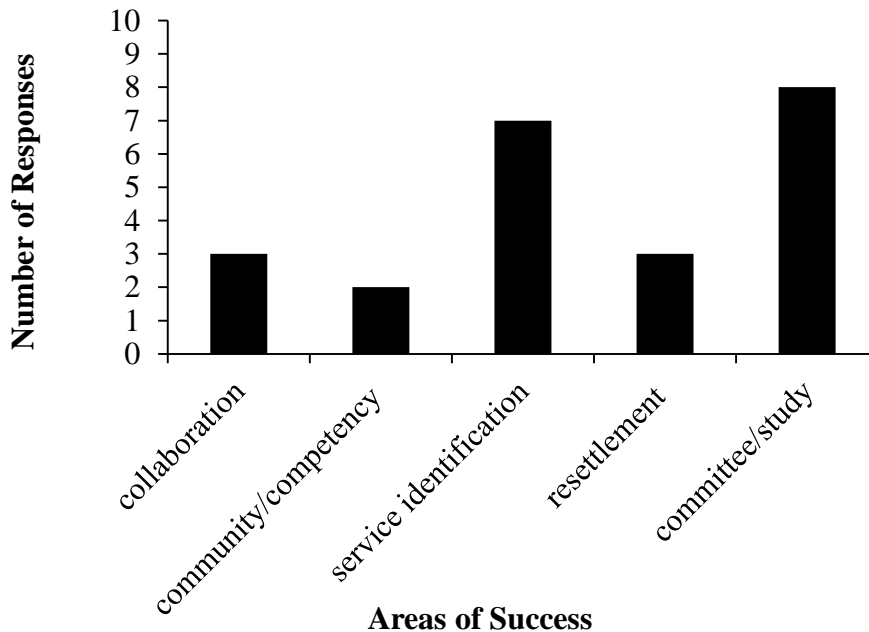
## What Have We Learned?



### What Have We Learned?

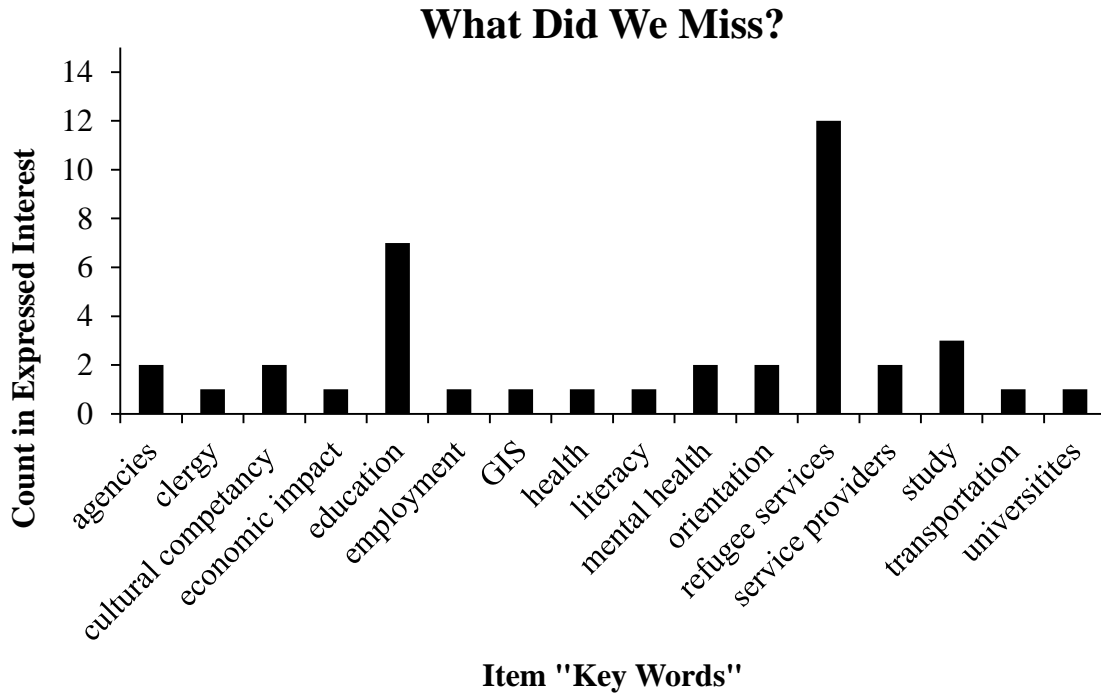
“It seemed that people learned a lot about what the [resettlement] agencies do,” Allen said. Respondents said they learned the least about refugee experiences and the history of Syracuse as a resettlement city.

## Where Have We Been Successful?



### Where Have We Been Successful?

OCL executive director Sandra Barrett said this question was interpreted differently. Some respondents interpreted it to mean how the study committee was successful; others interpreted it to mean how Syracuse is successful in resettling refugees.



**What Did We Miss?**

Felicia Castricone of Catholic Charities asked about the label “refugee services” in this chart and said perhaps it should read simply, “refugee voices”—meaning, the need to hear more from refugees themselves. The committee agreed that this most likely is the case.

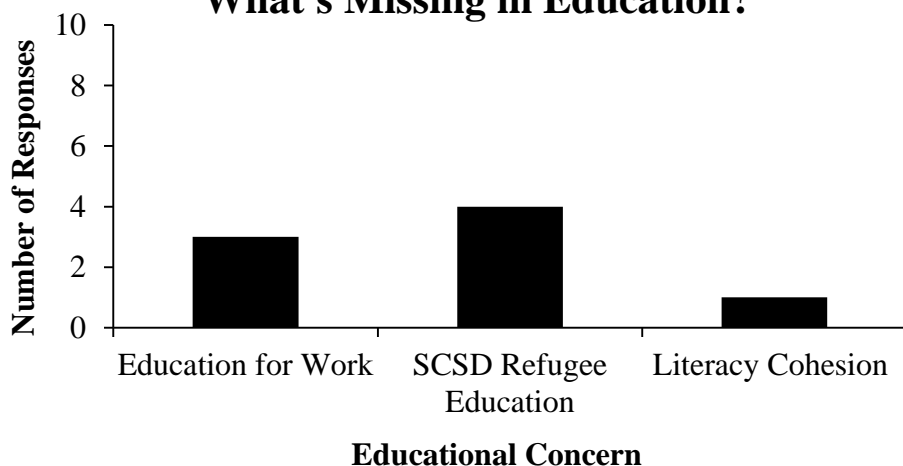
Discussion then focused on the second highest bar, “education.” Allen said she and Walton would be interviewing the head of the Syracuse City School District’s (SCSD’s) ELL office to gather more information.

Mark Cass of ProLiteracy said that it would be helpful to understand the trends in ELL services at city schools.

Lisa Warnecke said she would like to know which schools have nationality workers, and she shared an anecdote about a refugee who had been routinely taken out of Regents math for ELL, and as a consequence, failed the math Regents.

Holtz said there are many policies in the district that don’t seem to make sense, and this seems to be one of them.

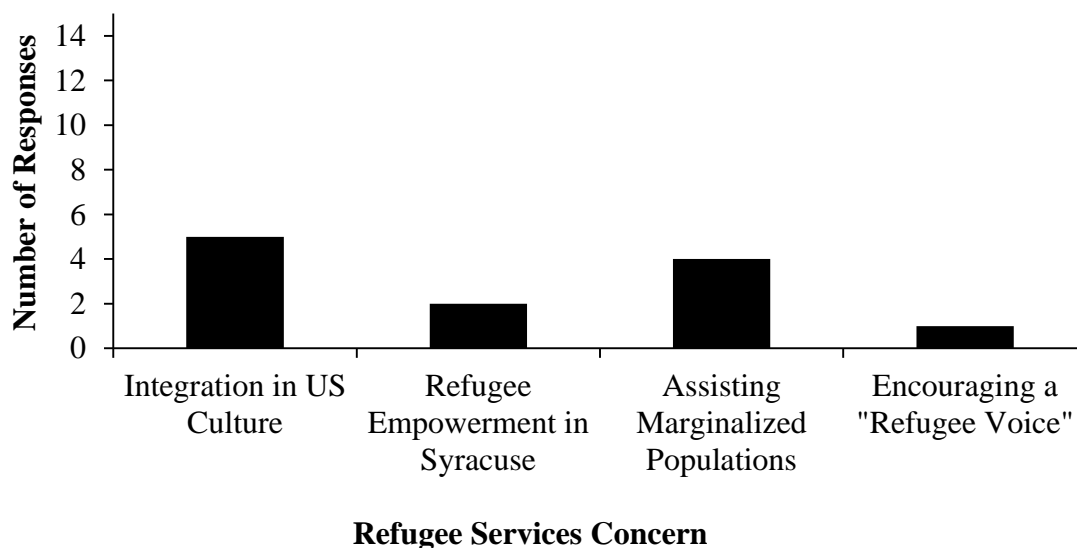
### What's Missing in Education?



#### What's Missing in Education?

Holtz asked Cass how much adult literacy programs and meetings intersected with those for children (SCSD programming). Cass said there was none, except there is a table at some literacy meetings for literacy across the lifespan. “[Still,] the schools seem to be set off a bit,” he said, adding that individual schools may not even talk to one another about their ELL programming.

### What's Missing Within the Refugee Community?



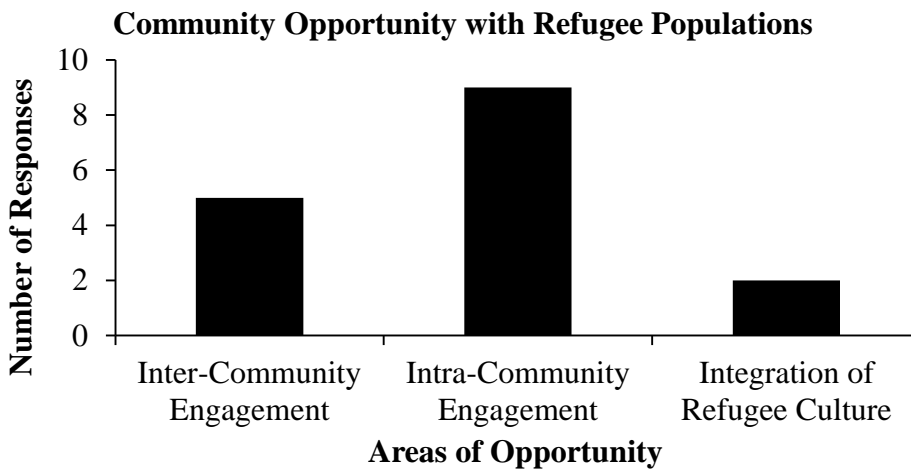
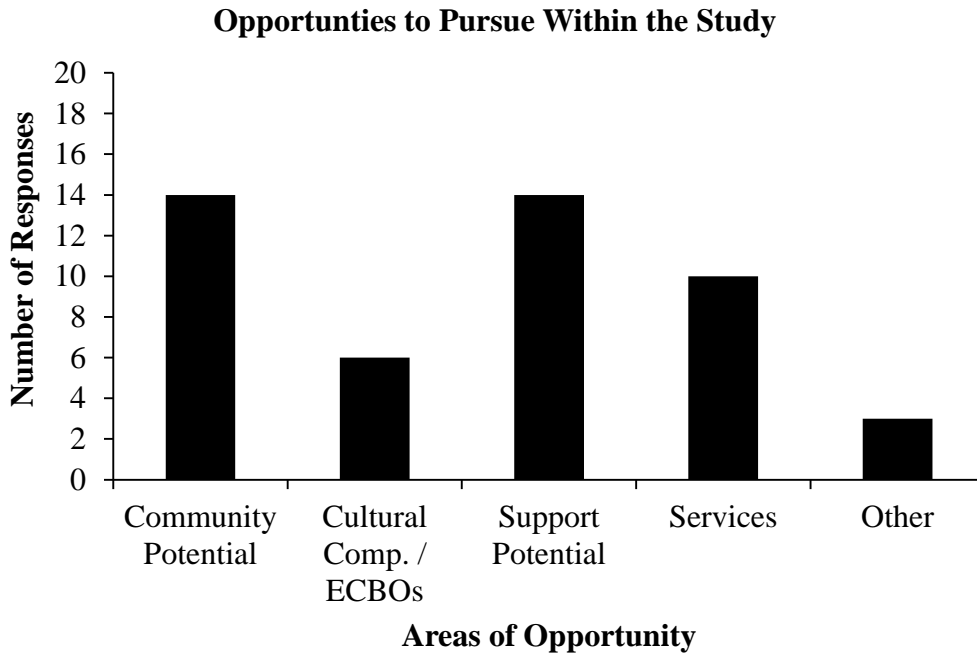
#### What's Missing Within the Refugee Community?

This is another case where some of the respondents understood the question to be about the Syracuse community and others about the study itself.

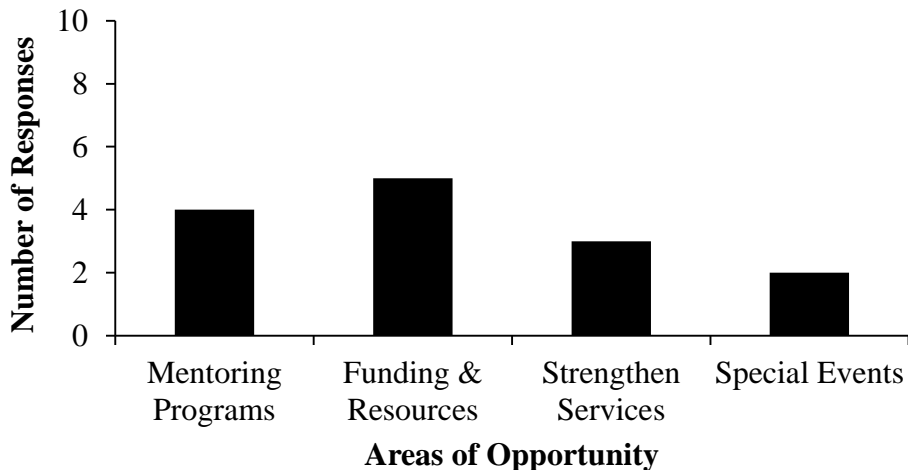
Holtz said that the Gifford Working Group is resuming its meetings and one of the issues it will focus on is women refugees.

### Opportunities

The next several graphs could inform the committee's study recommendations.



### Support Opportunities with Refugee Populations



#### Discussion after the presentation

Lois Schroeder asked if anyone in the brainstorming session expressed concern about some refugees' inappropriate child disciplinary techniques. She sits on the advisory board for InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans and said that at its last meeting, many advisory board members were concerned about how to handle the cultural differences in child discipline. In many instances, how some refugees are disciplining their children would be considered child abuse.

Holtz reminded study committee members of Syracuse City Police Det. Dzenan Selimovic's presentation on crime and safety and his assertion to fellow refugees that "You're in America now," and so they will need to obey U.S. laws and adapt to U.S. culture. Holtz said Ethnic Community Based Organizations could play important roles in mentoring refugees on this issue.

#### The Next Steps: Examining Innovative Programs Here and Elsewhere

Next, the study committee will be examining what recommendations it should make, and, in this process, will be looking at what Syracuse and other cities do well.

Holtz conducted a mini-brainstorming session for what she called, "Best in Class," or programs and communities here and nationally that we should be celebrating or exploring. The following is her notes for what could be researched further.

#### Best in Class – in Syracuse

- Refugee youth scholarships to local summer camps. Also Seeds of Peace – national program but IFW and SYTE made sure refugees participated this year.
- Local farms – crops, livestock more specific to refugees. Assisted by Cornell Coop to strengthen.

- Community gardens – Northside UP, Bob’s School, Syracuse Grows in partnership. ELL instructor participates in garden development.
- Medical community:
  - Upstate’s clinic specific to refugees; development of global medicine concentration
  - Other health providers expanding on Upstate’s work
  - The “Morrow Group” – roundtable to discuss refugee/immigrant health needs, has led to more health screenings; also provides a model for governing/policy changes.
- Early childhood education and refugees – study being conducted by LeMoyne in conjunction with Imagination Library.
- Jobs program – Northside Up “train” program.
- Arts and Cultural linkages – i.e. Syracuse Stage’s *Cry for Peace*, ArtRage, World Refugee Day.
- Success of former Vietnamese refugees – how they worked cooperatively to develop jobs, housing opportunities.
- Yoga program in conjunction with Bhutanese Community Association.

Best in Class – Elsewhere

- Lancaster PA – its city market has a concentration on cultural/ethnic foods and veggies. Helen and Jonnell will investigate further.
- Dayton, OH – has a city driven action plan. Sarah to investigate further.
- Boise, ID – mayor and community came together to address gaps. Some projects:
  - Mobile vans to playgrounds, providing information and recreational activities.
  - Transportation – buses geared towards refugee needs. Sarah will investigate further.
- Foundation support across the country –i.e. Casey, Mott. Heidi will investigate further.
- Citizen education – Mark Cass will investigate further.
- Twin Cities – Sarah will investigate.
- Rochester’s economic development initiative – Sarah will investigate.
- Utica – one stop shop for refugees. We already have heard from them, might bear some additional investigation as we become more aware.

The next OCL study committee meeting will be on Oct. 25, at 12 pm at PEC.