



**WISCONSIN STATEWIDE REFUGEE HEALTH CONFERENCE  
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**Refugee Capacity Building of Ethnic Community Based Agencies**

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# African and Asian Refugees Consortium (AARC)

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- **AARC Formation**
- **Goals of AARC**
- **Case Management and Supportive Social Services**
- **Consortium Capacity Building & Community Relations Building**
- **Participatory Action Research Process**



## Benefits in Joining AARC

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- 1) **Best Practices Opportunity** - Provides opportunity to share and learn best practices in working with the community.
- 2) **Grassroots Accountability** - Provides a link between the grassroots community and the mainstream service providers.
- 3) **Resource/Information Sharing and Referrals & Other Opportunities** – Provides opportunities for sharing of information, expertise, referrals, participant outreach, and even grant development opportunities.
- 4) **Cultural Responsiveness** - Provides opportunities for members to share and learn how to effectively educate the mainstream service providers on culturally and linguistically appropriate services to their community.



## Why the Need to Sustain AARC?

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- 1) **To continue providing the benefits and opportunities to develop** programs and services, resources, information and grassroots accountability, **and experience cultural responsiveness and best practices** in working with the refugee/immigrant communities.
- 2) **Ethnic agencies are here to stay** – they need ongoing support & resources for capacity building, community relations building, collaboration/networking, self-sustainability.
- 3) **Community Sharing and learning together** - share resources; face challenges together – arrive at common goals, common strategies, make community a better place to live in, refugees to adapt better in their new life.
- 4) **Ongoing need for cultural competency and integration of indigenous service provision with the mainstream service provision.**



## Challenges/Opportunities in Refugee Consortium Building

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- 1) **Need to work with different subgroups of community** (Pan African Community - Somali, Somali Bantu, Congolese, etc. and different Hmong clans) - Diverse groups means diverse needs, diverse personalities, longer time to build relations. ***Culturally appropriate strategies are utilized in assessing individual needs and identifying long/short term personal and career goals.***
- 2) **Lack of resources** – ongoing need for agency fund development, sustainability . ***Symbiotic relationships through which the CBOs serve as the lead agency for the grant applications sent to the local and other appropriate national funding, whereas the university becomes the lead agent and a fiscal agent for the state grant application. This arrangement has prevented partners from competing for limited fund and expanded the possibilities for funding for both the university and community.***
- 3) **Need for capacity building within each agency** - challenges in staff turnover, engaging and learning with the Board; responding to program demands of financial, programmatic, and service accountability, including documentation and reporting. ***Community social capital (volunteerism) are being built and utilized.***
- 4) **Need to focus on agency core competency** - need to focus on a special agency capability to excel in one or more service competencies that could be provided in the community vs. the demand to be “all” to the community. ***Increased visibility and capacity of agencies to recognize and respond to the changing needs of their communities***



## Examples of Roles Changes that Refugees Must Endure

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PAST/OWN COUNTRY	PRESENT in the US
<i>Provider</i>	<i>Dependent</i>
<i>Home Owner</i>	<i>Tenant, Homeless</i>
<i>Worker, Skilled</i>	<i>Unemployed, student</i>
<i>Parent, Caregiver</i>	<i>Dependent on children (language)</i>
<i>Clan member, Somali</i>	<i>African, African-American</i>
<i>Citizen</i>	<i>Refugees</i>
<i>Gender-specific roles</i>	<i>Shared roles</i>



# Mainstream Vs. Grassroots Case Management

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Case Manager	Mainstream	Ethnic
Role	Regular contact with refugee clients: Case management as a regular work hour responsibility	Regular & continuous contact with refugee clients: Case management as a 24/7 responsibility



# Mainstream Vs. Grassroots Case Management

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Case Manager	Mainstream	Ethnic
Orientation	Use established procedures to monitor, advocate and adjust services to help refugees move towards self-sufficiency	Use clients' culture to identify with the assessment of needs for support
Boundaries	Provide concrete help and support to refugee individuals	Expand beyond the boundaries of their job- e.g., resolving parking tickets, home heating bills etc.



# Implications: Grassroots Collaboration and Coalition Building

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## Participant Feedback/Discussions

- **Discussions on the implication of grassroots collaboration and coalition building** (such as the AARC/MARC) on education, research, and policy?
- **Practical suggestions from participants** on ways of examining how multi-ethnic community consortium creates supportive pathways into the wider community, linking refugees with an extensive network of other sectors, services and agencies.



## Evaluation Rubrics for Community Collaboration

Evaluation Category	Rating A (Efforts are successful)	Rating B (Efforts need Improvement)	Rating C (No/lack of Efforts)	Challenges & Action Taken
Information Sharing				
Participant Referrals Recruitment, Outreach				
New Initiative and/or New program				
Resource Development				