



## New Arrivals: Planning for Refugee Resettlement

A Workplan Prepared for the National Somali Bantu Project

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*"The mission of RefugEEE Consulting is to facilitate an innovative and participatory approach for resettling the Somali Bantu refugees in the Portland Metropolitan Area. Our approach will strive to maintain existing Somali Bantu social networks; foster connections with the broader community; and, promote social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity."*

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### **Introduction**

This workplan has been developed by RefugeEE Consulting to address a need for comprehensive refugee resettlement planning for a population of Somali Bantu Refugees currently immigrating to the United States. In this workplan we will outline a problem definition, review background information, define our scope of work, and describe how we will arrive at a series of recommendations for creating a successful place-based community for the Somali Bantu.

### **Problem Statement**

In February 2004 the first of approximately 200 Somali Bantu refugees began arriving in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan region. These Somali Bantu are part of a larger group that has been living in refugee camps along the Somali-Kenyan border for more than a decade after fleeing persecution during Somalia's ongoing civil war. In 1999, the US State Department declared the Somali Bantu a "Persecuted Minority Group," which cleared the way for nearly 12,000 Somali Bantu to begin the process of immigrating to the U.S. as refugees. A comprehensive approach to planning is needed to ensure that the Somali Bantu can maintain existing cultural ties, achieve economic independence, and foster connections with the broader community.

A network of government agencies and non-profit charities in Portland devoted to assisting with refugee resettlement will handle the Somali Bantu's initial integration into U.S. society. Agencies and organizations such as the Department of Human Services, Catholic Charities, Lutheran

Community Services Northwest, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Mercy Corps Northwest, and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) will provide a variety of relocation services including housing placement, English language training, and job training and placement. However, these services only last for a period of one to five years and do not address the long term needs of refugee groups. Existing programs available to assist refugees appear piecemeal and narrow in scope, providing evidence that there is a need for a different type of strategy.

Refugees face tremendous challenges when they seek to become members of our society, from language barriers and cultural differences to lack of education and the psychological effects of trauma. The Somali Bantu are a particularly vulnerable, or "high risk" group of refugees, due to their significant cultural and religious differences from mainstream U.S. culture, as well as their low levels of education, English language proficiency, and marketable job skills. It is particularly important that their arrival is dealt with comprehensively if they are to be integrated successfully. Unfortunately, much of the refugee resettlement process in the United States is characterized by the lack of a systematic approach to planning for the long-term well being of refugee populations. Additionally, it is our assessment that those programs and agencies that deal with refugees often struggle to marshal the resources to address even short term needs, let alone the more comprehensive approach that is needed to build a successful resettlement program.





### History

#### **The Somali Bantu**

**B**antu is a collective term referring to the Bantu language speaking ethnic groups of East Africa. Persecuted throughout much of their history, Bantu populations were often enslaved by other Africans, as well as by European colonizers as late as the 1930s. Today, the Bantu are still the victims of overt discrimination in many areas, forcing them into low-level jobs and subsistence farming. (VanLehman, 2000)

A significant population of Bantu were brought to Somalia as slaves beginning in the 1700s. This practice accelerated during the 1800s when as many as 50,000 Bantu were brought to Somalia as slave labor for plantations and industry. (VanLehman, 2000)

The Bantu are a diverse group of people with a varied cultural and ethnic background. However, under the pressures of discrimination and slavery, Bantu in Somalia have become a distinct ethnic group known as the Somali Bantu

While the Somali Bantu are no longer slaves, The Somali government continued to discriminate against them by institutionalizing political, economic and educational discrimination after the country gained independence. Intermarriage between the Somali Bantu tribes and Somali clans is rare, putting the Bantu at another disadvantage as Somali clans traditionally make ties to other clans through marriage. (VanLehman, 2000)

Somali Bantu family structure is similar to traditional

patterns in the U.S. with men working outside the home or on a farm and women serving as heads of household, doing food preparation and caring for children. Family structure influences the living patterns of the Somali Bantu who frequently arrange housing along lines of gender, age or status within the family (Van Lehman, 2000).

In Somalia, urban Somali Bantu were active in woodworking, vehicular repair, tailoring, and electronic machine maintenance, whereas the rural Bantu typically farmed or worked in large plantations. (Van Lehman, 2000).

In addition to being forced into the lowest echelons of Somali society, the Somali Bantu faced the pressures of Somalia's long civil war which began in the early 1990s. Thousands fled to refugee camps in Kenya seeking protection. Once in the camps, for the first time the Somali Bantu experienced a rise in social status. As Kenyan police, aid workers, and Kenyan government officials treated them more respectfully, the Bantu began to speak out and defend themselves against their mistreatment. In 1999. After nearly a decade spent in refugee camps, the Somali Bantu were declared a persecuted minority group by the U.S. government, and offered the chance for a new life as refugees in the United States.

While life in the U.S. will certainly be a dramatic change for the Somali Bantu, in the refugee camps they have had some exposure to urban, western ways of life. The International Organization for Migration conducts cultural orientation for all U.S.-bound Somali Bantu refugees over





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the age of 15. Orientation topics include work, housing, health, and education. Over the next year officials plan to resettle nearly 12,000 Bantu from refugee camps into major cities nationwide, including Portland, OR.

Historically, most refugees to the U.S. have come from urban areas and are relocated to cities, however, the Somali Bantu have strong ties to rural life and agricultural work. Therefore, they may face considerable problems in adjusting to urban placement once in the U.S. (Van Lehman, 2000).

### **Acculturation**

Today, an estimated 300 Somali Bantu already live in the United States. Of these, some have come as students, others have accompanied spouses or other family members, and a few have begun to resettle as refugees. The Somali Bantu, like other refugee groups, have tended to concentrate in urban areas, although the Somali Bantu have traditionally lived in rural regions.

Aside from adjusting to basic elements of life in the U.S., the Bantu must contend with the psychological challenges of acculturation. Literature regarding refugees and acculturation shows that the range of response to a new culture ranges from acceptance, rejection, a blending of old and new way, or a sense of alienation from both cultures. (Celano. et al., 2001) These issues need to be further explored to inform our information gathering and eventual final product. Additionally, as the Somali Bantu are fleeing violence and persecution in their home country, they may suffer from numerous psychological problems linked to

trauma. The stress of relocation can further exacerbate existing psychological problems, or create new ones. By ensuring that our project aids the Bantu in creating a supportive and safe environment, we hope to mitigate some psychological problems.



*Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya*





### **Trends**

#### **Refugee Resettlement**

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, refugee arrivals to the U.S. have slowed considerably. In fiscal year 2002, the United States resettled 27,000 refugees, the lowest such number since the U.S. refugee resettlement program began in 1980 (U.S. Committee for Refugees, 2004). In the late 1990s, prior to the declines that followed the terrorist attacks, the United States was resettling more than 70,000 refugees a year (Immigration & Refugee Services of America, December 31, 2002). This dramatic decline is attributable to enhanced background checks, verification of claimed family relationships, FBI review of selected applicants, and fingerprinting of all refugees arriving at U.S. ports of entry.

Of the approximately 27,000 refugees resettled in the U.S. in 2002, fewer than 3,000 were from Africa (Immigration and Refugee Services of America, December 31, 2002), despite the fact that in 1999 the U. S. declared the Somali Bantu a persecuted group eligible for admission to the United States. Due to aforementioned delays related to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the resettlement of thousands of Somali Bantu is only now getting underway.

Locally, the Portland metropolitan region received approximately 900 refugees in 2001. In fiscal year 2003, however, only 500 refugees arrived in the Portland metro region and many of these were from former Soviet block countries (Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization, March 5, 2004).

#### **The Morning After**

Obtaining data on what happens to refugees after they arrive in the United States is difficult, partially because the U.S. Census Bureau collects information on foreign-born residents and ethnic background, but not specifically on refugees. This data, however, shows that foreign born residents are more likely to live in inner cities, to live in larger family households, to be less educated, to be less employed, to earn less, and to have higher rates of poverty. With regard to poverty rates, for example, 16.1 percent of foreign-born residents were living in poverty in March of 2002 as compared to 11.1 percent for the native population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

These trends hold true for the Portland Metropolitan region as well. The Portland area's foreign born population, for example, is more than twice as likely to live in poverty than the native population, 18 percent compared to 8 percent respectively. Indeed, the Portland metro region has had to cope with a 108 percent increase in its foreign born population over the 1990s, making it the sixteenth fastest growing immigrant state in the country. As of 2000, the foreign born population made up 12 percent of the region's population. Though making up only two percent of the total foreign born population, the majority of African-born residents have settled in the Northeast neighborhoods of Portland (Lotspeich, et al., 2003).

#### **Why Plan for Refugees?**

Host cities have to make accommodations for refugees one way or another since it is not a question of if they will come, but when and how many. Our group believes that





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comprehensive planning needs to be done for the benefit of the incoming refugees as well as for the community as a whole.

We have identified the early years after arrival as some of the most vulnerable for refugees. After the initial resettlement process, refugees are frequently left to fend for themselves, handicapped by a number of factors, many relating to cultural differences. With regard to the Somali Bantu, the potential handicaps are more numerous than those faced by other refugee groups. Like other refugees, the Somali Bantu are largely illiterate, have little education, and have little or no command of the English language. They are unprepared for the western job market, yet often must support a large family with as many as five children or more. Unlike some other refugees, however, the Somali Bantu must deal with additional challenges such as controversial cultural practices, being Muslim in a predominantly Christian country, and being black in a country where racism is a persistent problem with broad ramifications such as greater poverty and illness rates. Moreover, being the first wave of Somali Bantu refugees to be resettled in the U.S., they do not have a base from which to draw support as do other refugee groups such as the Hmong.

Though information on the specific negative outcomes of resettlement on refugee communities is scarce, some studies offer a potential insight as to the pitfalls that may lie ahead. For example, a study on alcohol and drug use among displaced persons suggested that stress related to cultural conflict and past trauma, together with a lack

of social and economic coping resources, contributes to substance abuse as a maladaptive coping mechanism. An alternative explanation offered is that immigrants are simply adopting the customs and practices of the host society. Research has suggested, however, that those who adapt to their new social environment while retaining important elements of their native culture are less likely to develop substance abuse habits. (Johnson, 1996)

Another study addressed Laotian street gangs in Dallas, Texas. It found that Asian refugees were resettled in poor, crowded, multiethnic, high-crime inner-city areas of Dallas where they endured robberies, assaults, burglaries, and vandalism daily. However, they seldom reported crimes due to fear of police and a lack of knowledge of resources. The study suggests that Asian refugee youth in these communities turned to gangs because they were unable to satisfy expectations of success through acceptable means and thus, sought success through gang membership (Coward & Coward, 1996).

The impact of resettlement on refugee health is another area worthy of serious concern. A 2000 study (Kunstadter, 2000) of Hmong refugees in California found that they had high rates of hypertension, obesity, and self-reported illnesses. A study of emigration impacts on Southeast Asian refugees found that stress created by acculturation was the strongest overall predictor of mental health (Nicholson, 1997). Mental health impacts can include, among other things, increased levels of depression, frustration, and even suicide. Between 1998 and 2003, for example, nearly half of all teen suicides in Fresno, California were from the





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Hmong refugee community (Yang, 2003).

Finally, a frequent negative outcome of resettlement is persistent poverty that compounds the other challenges refugees face. The 1990 Census, for example, found that 65 percent of Hmong Americans were unemployed and more than 60 percent lived below the poverty line (Yang, 2003). Indeed, the issue of helping refugees escape persistent poverty is the primary concern and most perplexing challenge of most resettlement efforts.

land and each are recognized for farming expertise. Thus maintaining ties to agriculture has proven to be an effective tool for developing positive outcomes after resettlement.

A report by Elizabeth Sheehan of the University of Connecticut offers some insight as to the significance of farming practices for the cultural identity of the Hmong. The report looks at Hmong communities in the Carolinas where nearly 2,000 Hmong have obtained farmland that are owned either by individual families or by extended family groups. The report argues that American ecological, economic, religious and secular value systems have threatened Hmong ethnic identity and cultural survival. In response, the Hmong turned to traditional agriculture which offers familiarity amidst an unfamiliar and even threatening social and physical environment. Further, purchasing land strengthens culture in that it provides a common social space in which traditions are re-invented. Along these lines, eating traditional food maintains identity within the context of American society (Sheehan, 2004).

In researching how a new refugee community can acquire agricultural land and equipment, The New Entry project in Massachusetts offers a useful illustration. This organization links Asian immigrants with “mentor” farmers who lease land to them and share machinery, irrigation and chores such as plowing and tilling. The program allows the immigrants, many of whom hold full-time jobs, to minimize operating costs and time needed to raise a crop. It also offers support in learning the skills necessary to grow and market vegetables sustainably. Such a program could serve as an excellent example for addressing similar

### Best practices

#### *Looking for a New Direction*

Despite serious barriers to success, not all is bleak for the Somali Bantu. Many resettlement professionals are optimistic that the Somali Bantu will succeed in integrating with U.S. society. They point to the Somali Bantu’s work ethic, eagerness to learn English, proven record of tenacity and adaptability, and past experience of being a minority group in a challenging environment.

While each immigrant population has unique characteristics, the Hmong experience is useful for informing the Somali Bantu resettlement process. Like the Somali Bantu, the Hmong have a deep cultural bond and long experience with agricultural practices. Since 1975, over 100,000 Hmong refugees have been resettled in the United States and case studies show that some have been relatively successful in mitigating the aforementioned troubles often experienced by refugees after resettlement (Sheehan, 2004). Cultural traditions of both groups are strongly tied to the farming of





issues among the Somali Bantu in Oregon.

### ***Exploiting Cultural Strengths***

Hmong farmers in California have exploited their cultural strengths to their economic benefit. In addition to growing strawberries and cherry tomatoes, the Hmong farmers grow up to 100 varieties of Asian vegetables. This has allowed them to export 20 percent of their production to foreign markets including Asian countries and Canada (Bowles, 2004). The “exotic” Asian produce grown through The New Entry Project in Massachusetts, moreover, can command high prices in Boston and New York markets for the Asian immigrants. In Michigan, on the other hand, the Hmong own and operate more than 100 restaurants and make use of their diasporic multicultural heritage by serving American, Chinese, and Thai foods (Yang, 2003).

### ***Strengthening Community Ties***

In addition to pursuing agriculture, the Hmong have benefited from organizations that help to strengthen community ties. In Minnesota, for example, many in the Hmong community rely on the Hmong Cultural Center to foster sustained cultural identity among Hmong youth and adults. The Center offers a variety of Hmong programs including traditional dance and music programs, a youth cultural arts mentorship program, a cultural customs program, as well as ESL and citizenship courses. But The Center also educates non-Hmong professionals and service workers about the background and cultural-specific needs of the Hmong service population.

### ***Fulfilling Geographic Locations***

The Hmong arrived in the Carolinas only after the U.S. Hmong community sent scouts to look for a geographic region that most resembles their home in Southeast Asia. The Hmong have also gravitated away from Fresno, California, once the largest Hmong concentration in the country, to the new concentration center of Minneapolis/St. Paul. The reason behind this migration was a desire to find viable employment and a safe social environment for their families. Likewise, Somali refugees have been largely successful in resettling in the small town of Lewiston, Maine after the Somali community began looking for alternatives to large cities such as Atlanta. The Somali's were concerned about high crime rates and poor schools in the cities, but have now thrived in the more subdued lifestyle of Lewiston, Maine. These examples of cultural self-determinism offer hope that the Somali Bantu may shape a positive future for themselves and future generations.





### Scope of Work

RefugEEE Consulting will focus on place-making for the Somali Bantu community in Portland, Oregon. Our group will be focusing on this particular community because the Portland-based National Somali Bantu Project (NSBP), the organization responsible for Somali Bantu resettlement nationwide, requested planning assistance. Approximately 200 Somali Bantu are coming to Portland initially, but because of the amenities that Portland has to offer, it is also anticipated to be a city where second-wave migration occurs; meaning that several hundred more Somali Bantu may find their way here in the coming years. The Somali Bantu moreover will likely find resettlement more challenging due to their unique cultural characteristics. The Somali Bantu are therefore likely to be an underserved population in our region that could benefit from our planning expertise.

The need for a comprehensive approach to planning for refugee resettlement must be balanced against the reality of finite resources and time. While this makes it necessary for RefugEEE Consulting to narrow the scope of our work, it is possible for us to address specific gaps in the current framework governing the refugee resettlement process. Our group will identify gaps in services provided, recommend a more comprehensive strategy, and focus on five specific elements for creating a place based community for the Somali Bantu refugees. While we would like to make recommendations on an entire strategy, our team is limited by a ten-week time frame within which this project must take place. For this reason, we have chosen to focus on five specific elements that focus on place making.

Because the information we provide will be used by the NSBP at some undetermined point in the future (most likely starting 1-2 years from the time of the Somali Bantu's arrival in Portland), our product will be designed to inform a future process. The future process will be executed by the NSBP, but decisions about relocation options will be driven by the Somali Bantu after they have all arrived in the region sometime in 2004. The NSBP's process will elicit what type of future the Somali Bantu envision for themselves and how they would like to make that vision a reality. We will strive to provide information that will be relevant to their process by providing general recommendations and suggestions rather than specifics that may become quickly outdated.

RefugEEE Consulting chose to focus on the place-based elements of a broader strategy both at the request of our client and by recognizing where we can lend added value to the project as a team of planners. A driving force for this project is the fact that the Somali Bantu come from a rural society where they farmed for a living and that opportunities may exist in the Portland region for them to continue their traditional farming practices. Our team will lend its expertise by taking this idea of finding agricultural land for the Somali Bantu and combining it with other necessary site criteria to create a successful community. We will focus on the place-making process including visioning, site selection, design recommendations and options for acquiring land.





### Product Summary

Our client, the National Somali Bantu Project (NSBP), has identified a need for information about potential relocation sites in the Portland Metropolitan area that would allow the Somali Bantu to thrive in a more intentional setting. The ideal site depicted by our client would promote livability and self-sufficiency by allowing the Bantu to celebrate and maintain cultural identity and heritage; connect with other Bantu refugees in the region; access social services and public education; interact with the surrounding community; continue traditional farming practices; and find economic independence.

As a refugee resettlement planning group that connects traditional resettlement activities with geographic concerns of place-making, RefugEEE Consulting proposes to provide our client with recommendations for creating a successful place-based community for the Somali Bantu in the Portland Metropolitan region.

Our team is committed to delivering a report to NSBP with our approach and recommendations for how to create a place-based community that will better serve the Somali Bantu. The report will be directed to Dan Van Lehman, Omar Eno and Monique Dupre at NSBP; however, the report will also serve as a model for place-based refugee planning nationwide. The report will cover the following aspects:

### ***I. BACKGROUND: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT***

- a) Specific problems of refugees
- b) Challenges face by the Somali Bantu
- c) Inadequacy of social services to address these problems

### ***II. A NEW VISION OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT***

- a) A comprehensive strategy of refugee relocation and integration

### ***III. OUR APPROACH***

- a) Create a Vision: Eliciting Desired Future Conditions of the Somali Bantu
  - 1) *Knowledge from NSBP*
  - 2) *Results of preliminary research*
  - 3) *Information gathered during interactions with the Somali Bantu*
  - 4) *Information gathered from interviews with other refugees and experts in the Portland area*
- b) Suggested steps for realizing desired future conditions
  - 1) *Organize*
  - 2) *Develop a financial plan*
  - 3) *Consider different investment strategies*
  - 4) *Choose a site*
  - 5) *Site Development Planning*
  - 6) *Develop evaluation criteria*





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While everything that appears in the outline will be covered in our report, the majority of our work over the term will focus on five specific components:

### **Creating a Vision: Eliciting Desired Future Conditions.**

Our team will paint a picture of what we believe to be a common set of desired future conditions. Insights will come from refugee and expert interviews, feedback from the Somali Bantu themselves, and from our literature reviews on common problems encountered by refugees.

**Choosing a Site:** This section will illustrate a set of site selection criteria that will flow from the vision described above. Site criteria will come to life with visual aids and GIS maps that will highlight potential site locations around Portland that best meet the criteria.

**Site Design Recommendations:** Based on our findings and our expertise as planners, our team will make a series of recommendations and highlight considerations for how a planned community could best be designed to foster the Somali Bantu vision.

**Investment Strategies:** This section will provide information and resources on different options for purchasing land and financing low-income housing. We will provide information on co-operative investment strategies, land trusts, and low-income housing tax credit opportunities.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Our team will highlight the criteria that IRCO and Dan Van Lehman are developing to measure

success in refugee resettlement. We will review these criteria to see if there are additional criteria that ought to be included to evaluate whether a place-based solution has had a positive or negative impact on the community.

Our group will pursue a number of different methods to implement this project. These methods will include literature reviews, interviews, experiential learning, data collection and representation. Each of these methods will be pursued within the framework of our mission.



*Somali Bantu During Daily Prayer*





### Methodology

#### Literature Review

At the outset, we will solidly ground ourselves in research on the topics of refugee resettlement and the culture and history of the Somali Bantu by conducting a comprehensive literature review. Additional literature reviews will explore such topics as investment strategies, green building design and other topics related to our final product.

#### Interviews

A high degree of importance will be given to a number of ethnographic interviews. Both formal and informal interviews will be conducted with Somali Bantu refugees, Portland metro area refugees, refugee aid agencies, experts in the field of resettlement, government representatives, and other stakeholders as appropriate. These interviews will inform our final product.

#### Experiential Learning

Visitations to selected site examples will also serve as an important source of information for our work. We intend to visit potential resettlement locations with Somali Bantu refugees and NSBP coordinators in order to directly involve the refugees in the selection of site examples. These visitations will occur after the initial selection of site examples has occurred and again after additional data has been collected and the site selection criteria have been modified according to Somali Bantu input.

#### Geographic Information Systems

Location specific data will be plugged into Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology that will serve a useful role in determining site selection criteria. For

example, various tasks such as determining the proximity of property to public transportation lines or school locations will be done using GIS mapping technology. In addition, GIS maps will be used in the final product to give visual representation to site selection criteria and site examples.

#### Fulfilling Our Mission

We are committed to fulfilling our mission statement, which directs us to maintain existing Somali Bantu social networks while they foster connections with the broader community. Underlining these goals is our commitment to social equity, environmental sustainability and economic opportunity.

Maintaining existing Somali Bantu social networks requires that our product allow the them opportunities to help shape familial and community living situations, and maintain desired cultural traditions and characteristics. This is best done through Somali Bantu participation in the planning process, as well as thoughtful consideration on our part about the needs and desires of the Somali Bantu community. Likewise, fostering Somali Bantu connections with the broader community will require a product that provides an opportunity for them to orient themselves with U.S. and regional culture. This should occur in a non-threatening and respectful setting that provides structured opportunities for the surrounding community to familiarize themselves with the Somali Bantu, and encourages the Somali Bantu to participate in the larger community in a meaningful way. Each of these items will necessitate a strong understanding of Somali Bantu culture, regional communities and the synergies between the two.





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To promote social equity we must consider several important factors, including housing and economic opportunities. The Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as that which costs less than 30 percent of household income, including mortgage or rent, and utilities. It is therefore wise that our product allow for the resettlement of Somali Bantu into affordable housing. Moreover, our product should reflect the need for livable wages and safe working conditions. In 2000 the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services defined a living wage for a family of four as \$17,050 a year, or \$8.20 per hour for a full-time, year round worker. This estimate, however, refers to living just above the poverty line. Beyond that, the Citizens for Livable Communities, an Oregon advocacy group, places the rate at closer to \$12 an hour with benefits. Though it may be unrealistic to expect the Somali Bantu to quickly obtain living wage jobs, our product will be evaluated partially on its ability to assist the Somali Bantu in obtaining higher incomes than traditionally obtained by newly arrived refugees. In general, the final product must also factor in opportunities to reduce the potential living costs for the Somali Bantu refugees.

Finally, the very serious threat of racial prejudice must be considered when developing the product. Efforts to peacefully settle the Somali Bantu will be emphasized. This will require a conscious effort to avoid or minimize potential conflicts with the existing community while also taking opportunities to engage and educate these communities during the process whenever possible.

In accordance with regional values and statewide planning goals, environmental sustainability will also be an important consideration. Our product will highlight resettlement opportunities that contribute to a reduction of energy and water consumption; air, water and soil pollution; and waste generation. Many of these opportunities will be explored in our identification of potential ecological building designs. In addition to reducing consumption, pollution, and waste, ecological buildings can contribute to maintaining Somali Bantu cultural heritage. Options such as utilizing earthen building materials could serve as a bridge between environmental design and traditional Somali Bantu structures. Likewise, priority will be given to sites that allow for and even encourage lifestyles independent of the automobile, thus providing the opportunity to reduce a significant source of pollution and energy consumption. Furthermore, our efforts will explore the potential to educate the general public and the Bantu about the need and benefits of environmental sustainability.



### Tasks

These tasks listed below correspond with the tasks listed on timeline that follows.

#### **1.0 Collect background information**

- 1.1 Literature reviews
  - 1.1.1 Immigrant/refugee trends in the U.S.
  - 1.1.2 Why Somali Bantu are at a higher risk level
  - 1.1.3 Gaps in service provided to U.S. refugees
  - 1.1.4 Acculturation
  - 1.1.5 General resettlement issues
  - 1.1.6 Place making
  - 1.1.7 Examples of successful refugee resettlement projects
    - 1.1.6.1 National
    - 1.1.6.2 International
- 1.2 Expert interviews on above topics when necessary

#### **2.0 Extrapolate desired future conditions of Somali Bantu refugees**

- 2.1 Synthesize relevant points from lit review
- 2.2 Somali Bantu interviews
- 2.3 Interviews with other refugees
  - 2.3.1 Hmong
  - 2.3.2 Oromo
  - 2.3.3 Russian

#### **3.0 Develop Site criteria based on desired future conditions**

- 3.1 Develop set and articulate
- 3.3 Find examples of site criteria to illustrate in our final report

#### **4.0 Select site examples**

- 4.1 Create GIS maps highlighting site examples
  - 4.1.1 Locate GIS RLIS layers for those criteria that are mappable
  - 4.1.2 Manipulate map layers to fit our maps
  - 4.1.3 Run criteria
  - 4.1.4 Combine mapping results with subjective criteria
  - 4.1.5 Select site examples
  - 4.1.6 Design maps
  - 4.1.7 Incorporate feedback into map as we receive it
- 4.2 Visit site examples with NSBP and Somali Bantu
  - 4.2.1 Use information from site visits to refine criteria and site examples

#### **5.0 Develop resettlement process recommendations (i.e. Next Steps)**

- 5.1 Develop next steps for NSBP based on our understanding of the situation in one year
- 5.2 Develop a set of evaluative criteria for NSBP to measure the success of their relocation project

#### **6.0 Research examples of ecological/green design features**

- 6.1 Research limitations of building codes
  - 6.1.1 Expert interviews
  - 6.1.2 Colleague documentation





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- 6.2 Document sustainable building options with photos
- 6.3 Lead a Bantu site visit to locations where ecological building practices are integrated into modern design
- 6.4 Synthesize input and information for final report

### **7.0 Research housing investment strategies**

- 7.1 Research strategies, options
- 7.2 Document examples, if necessary
- 7.3 Synthesize findings and format for final report

### **8.0 Synthesize findings for presentation**

- 8.1 Document our process and synthesize into an easy to read outline or flow chart
- 8.2 Produce full report



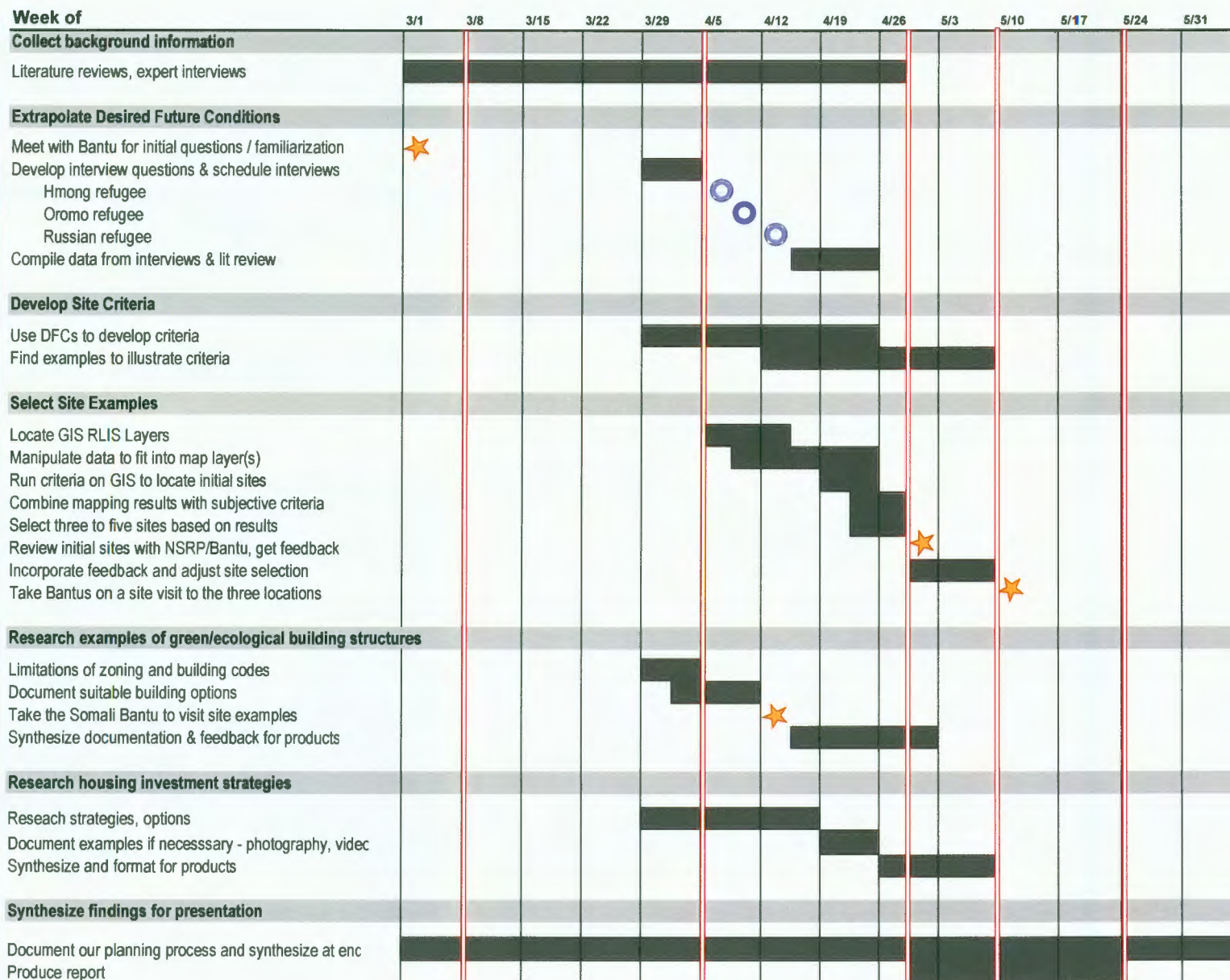
*Dadaab Refugee Camp, Kenya*



# New Arrivals: Planning For Refugee Resettlement

Refugee Consulting  
Timeline for Executing Somali Bantu Refugee Relocation  
Project  
March - June 2004

## Timeline



**KEY**

- Refugee interview
- Bantu engagement
- Client Check-in
- Monday





## New Arrivals: Planning For Refugee Resettlement





New Arrivals: Planning For Refugee Resettlement

Budget

RefugEEE Consulting  
Somali Bantu Relocation Assistance Project Budget

EXPENDITURES				
BUDGET ITEM / ACTIVITY	UNIT MEASURE	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	TOTAL COST
PERSONNEL				
Principal 1, Aaron Abrams	\$/Hour	\$ 25.00	220	\$ 5,500.00
Principal 2, Kristin Dahl	\$/Hour	\$ 25.00	220	\$ 5,500.00
Principal 3, Ryan Hunter	\$/Hour	\$ 25.00	220	\$ 5,500.00
Principal 4, Jennifer Kinney	\$/Hour	\$ 25.00	220	\$ 5,500.00
Principal 5, Angela Southwick	\$/Hour	\$ 25.00	220	\$ 5,500.00
SUBTOTAL				\$ 27,500.00
SUPPLIES				
Paper	Ream	\$ 5.99	3	\$ 17.97
Printer cartridges	Cartridge	\$ 30.00	3	\$ 90.00
Photocopying	Sheets	\$ 0.05	500	\$ 25.00
Color map printing	Sheets	\$ 1.50	25	\$ 37.50
Professional printing/binding	Sheets	\$ 0.99	300	\$ 297.00
Van rental	Van/day	\$ 55.00	3	\$ 165.00
Gas for van	Tank	\$ 40.00	3	\$ 120.00
SUBTOTAL				\$ 752.47
TOTAL EXPENDITURES				\$ 28,252.47
INCOME				
CONTRIBUTION	SOURCE			AMOUNT
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS				
Principal Labor	RefugEEE, Inc.			\$ 27,500.00
Van rental	National Somali Bantu Project (NSBP)			\$ 165.00
Gas for van	NSBP			\$ 120.00
Printing costs	NSBP			\$ 467.47
SUBTOTAL				\$ 28,252.47
TOTAL INCOME				\$ 28,252.47







### Our Team

#### Group Biographies

**Aaron Abrams:** Aaron initially became interested in Urban Planning as an outgrowth of his undergraduate studies in international relations and political science at the University of Oregon. He realized early on that creating meaningful change and lasting improvements in the daily lives of people could more effectively be accomplished through small-scale decisions made at the local level. With this in mind he returned to school, and is completing his Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning at Portland State University with a focus on land use and community development. Professionally, he has extensive experience in marketing and community outreach, as well as a wide range of technical skills related to design and print media. Additionally, he is an experienced public speaker, large and small group facilitator, and event planner. The Somali Bantu Refugee Project provides a unique opportunity for him to combine the local and international aspects of his education, bring his professional skills and experiences to bear on the problem, learn new skills, and be involved in the early stages of interesting and exciting changes in our region.

**Kristin Dahl:** Kristin brings to the team a strong sense of leadership and experience with project management. Professionally, she has spent two and half years on the State of Oregon's Sustainability initiative both at the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department and at Ecotrust. Her forte is in communications and creativity by transforming ordinary concepts into more holistic strategies that address a triple bottom line of environment, economy and social equity. Soon, Kristin will have a Masters in Urban

and Regional Planning with specializations in environment and community development that builds upon a B.A. in Economics and International Studies from Willamette University. Kristin also runs a small kayak instruction and international travel business in her spare time, and works as a river guide in order to share her appreciation of the environment with others.

**Ryan Hunter:** Ryan has several years of professional experience working as an organizer for environmental and fair trade non-profits in Oregon and Alaska. Prior to such work, Ryan traveled extensively around the world during which he visited and volunteered for numerous non-profit organizations in Europe, Asia and Latin America. In addition, Ryan served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Slovak Republic where he worked on issues ranging from international finance and trade, homelessness, and poverty and discrimination among the country's minority Roma population. As a Master's degree student in the Urban and Regional Planning program at Portland State, Ryan has focused his studies on community development and urban environmentalism. Ryan brings to the Bantu project community outreach and networking skills, as well as a strong understanding of the perspective of disadvantaged groups and the issues that impact them.

**Jennifer Kenny:** Trained as a journalist covering social and environmental issues, Jennifer became more interested in the role of participant rather than observer after several years of newspaper and magazine writing in the western United States and Ireland. Her academic focus within the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program has been





## New Arrivals: *Planning For Refugee Resettlement*

in community development and urban environmentalism. She brings to the Bantu project a strong background in public relations, writing and an understanding of community development concepts. Additionally, she is committed to a participatory approach to any planning process.

**Angela Southwick:** Angela is currently a student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at Portland State University with an emphasis on community development and public policy and administration. She has special interests in social justice and equity issues like affordable housing. Her core motivation throughout her studies has been empowering, organizing and engaging strong communities. Working on the organization and management of the Milwaukie Sunday Farmer's Market for four years, Angela witnessed how a common community activity can build personal bonds and revitalize business. To the Bantu resettlement project, she brings passion, strong information/data management skills and a commitment to community involvement.



*Somali Bantu refugees leaving Kenya for the United States*



## New Arrivals: Planning For Refugee Resettlement

### Peer Agreement

We, the members of the Bantu Resettlement Workshop project, agree to:

~ *Treat one another with kindness and compassion.*

~ *Seek clear understanding of task assignments before executing them.*

~ *Complete individual assignments by deadlines.*

~ *Ask for help whenever we need it.*

~ *Be open and honest about other time commitments.*

~ *Communicate!*

~ *Divide work in a fair manner in consideration of personal interests, quantity, and skills.*

~ *Provide and accept honest feedback and critiques in a constructive manner.*

~ *Execute our project in a manner that has a minimal environmental impact.*

~ *Review the structure of our group as needed.*

[Redacted]  
Aaron Abrams

3/15/04  
Date

[Redacted]  
Kristin Dahl

3.15.04  
Date

[Redacted]  
Ryan Hunter

03/15/04  
Date

[Redacted]  
Jennifer Kenny

3/15.04  
Date

[Redacted]  
Angela Southwick

3/15/04  
Date





### **Communication Plan**

#### **Internal Group Communication**

##### *Biweekly Meetings*

Most group communication will be reporting at the biweekly meetings on Sundays and Wednesdays with major group assignments due on Sundays. Meetings will be rescheduled when conflicts arise. At the beginning of the meeting, a note taker is designated. At the end of the meeting, an agenda will be set for the next meeting, based on assignments. These agendas should be included in the meeting notes, but remain flexible for changes that occur between meetings. Changes in the agenda should be discussed at the beginning of the next meeting. The notes should be posted to the Yahoo Group, RefugEEE Consulting, as a Word file in the folder called "Minutes."

##### *Issues Between Meetings*

Small two person teams will be designated to each task identified in this proposal with one of those people being the lead. These teams will execute the bulk of the work, but major issues will be decided within the larger group. Resolving issues that cannot wait until the meeting will be resolved via email.

##### *Yahoo Group*

A Yahoo Group for RefugEEE Consulting has been created to track and document our process, consolidate our work, and give all members easy access to web links, contact information, a calendar with important dates, databases, and all the drafts of our work product

#### **External Communication**

External communication with interview subjects, professors, and concerned parties will be assigned along with task assignment. The person in the lead for an assignment will also be in charge of communication surrounding that topic. This will ensure that each contact will not receive an over abundance of communication from our group.

#### **Client Communications**

We will communicate with the client in two ways. We will meet with the client as a group six times during Spring term to provide updates and summaries of our work and obtain the client's feedback. Our completed product will be presented to the client at our final meeting.

Other communication with the client between these meetings will be discussed at RefugEEE Consulting meetings and emailed or discussed with the client by Kristin Dahl. We want these communications to be coordinated through one person so the client is more comfortable and is not overwhelmed with questions from our group throughout the term.

#### **Project Changes**

Any major changes will be discussed at the next scheduled bi-weekly RefugEEE Consulting meeting and presented to the client as soon as possible. If extremely urgent, a special meeting will be scheduled or the change will be discussed via email. Minor changes will be presented to the client as a summary at the official client meetings discussed above.





### Appendices

#### Memorandum of Understanding

*Agreed upon between:  
RefugEEE Consulting  
and the  
National Somali Bantu Project*

Monday March 15, 2004

In 2004, approximately 200 Somali Bantu refugees will be resettled in the Portland Metropolitan Region. These refugees will receive important but fragmented services from a network of non-profit organizations and government agencies during their first one to five years in the region. The National Somali Bantu Project (NSBP), however, has identified a need to establish a more comprehensive, long term planning approach to the resettlement of the Somali Bantu that addresses the historical inequities and negative outcomes so often accompanying refugee resettlement.

In conjunction with this need, NSBP seeks information about potential relocation sites in the Portland Metropolitan area that would allow the Somali Bantu to thrive in a more intentional setting. The ideal site depicted by NSBP would promote livability and self-sufficiency by allowing the Bantu to celebrate and maintain cultural identity and heritage; connect with other Bantu refugees in the region; access social services and public education; interact with the surrounding community; continue traditional farming practices; and find economic independence.

The NSBP has therefore solicited the help of RefugEEE

Consulting, a refugee resettlement planning group, in making recommendations for creating a successful place-based community for the Somali Bantu in the Portland Metropolitan region. In compliance with this request, RefugEEE Consulting will facilitate an innovative and participatory approach for resettling the Somali Bantu refugees in the Portland Metropolitan Area. RefugEEE Consulting's approach will strive to maintain existing Somali Bantu social networks, foster Somali Bantu connections with the broader community, and promote social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity.

By June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004, RefugEEE Consulting will provide NSBP with a final report that contains the following components:

#### ***I. BACKGROUND: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT***

- a) Specific problems of refugees
- b) Challenges face by the Somali Bantu
- c) Inadequacy of social services to address these problems

#### ***II. A NEW VISION OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT***

- a) A comprehensive strategy of refugee relocation and integration

#### ***III. OUR APPROACH***

- a) Create a Vision: Eliciting Desired Future Conditions of the Somali Bantu
  - 1) Knowledge from NSBP
  - 2) Results of preliminary research





## New Arrivals: Planning For Refugee Resettlement

- 3) *Information gathered during interactions with the Somali Bantu*
- 4) *Information gathered from interviews with other refugees and experts in the Portland area*
- b) Suggested steps for realizing desired future conditions
  - 1) *Organize*
  - 2) *Develop a financial plan*
  - 3) *Consider different investment strategies*
  - 4) *Choose a site*
  - 5) *Site Development Planning*
  - 6) *Develop evaluation criteria*

While everything that appears in the outline will be covered in the RefugEEE Consulting report, the majority of the report will revolve around five specific components:

### **Creating a Vision: Eliciting Desired Future Conditions.**

Our team will paint a picture of what we believe to be a common set of desired future conditions. Insights will come from refugee and expert interviews, feedback from the Somali Bantu themselves, and from our literature reviews on common problems encountered by refugees.

**Choosing a Site:** This section will illustrate a set of site selection criteria that will flow from the vision described above. Site criteria will come to life with visual aids and GIS maps that will highlight potential site locations around Portland that best meet the criteria.

**Site Design Recommendations:** Based on our findings and our expertise as planners, our team will make a series of recommendations and highlight considerations for how

a planned community could best be designed to foster the Somali Bantu vision.

**Investment Strategies:** This section will provide information and resources on different options for purchasing land and financing low-income housing. We will provide information on co-operative investment strategies, land trusts, and low-income housing tax credit opportunities.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Our team will highlight the criteria that the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) and Dan Van Lehman are developing to measure success in refugee resettlement. We will review these criteria to see if there are additional criteria that ought to be included to evaluate whether a place-based solution has had a positive or negative impact on the community.

Our group will pursue a number of different methods to implement this project. These methods will include literature reviews, interviews, experiential learning, data collection and representation. Each of these methods will be pursued within the framework of our mission.

This report will be completed according to the attached timeline and budget.

Over the course of implementing the project, NSBP will provide RefugEEE Consulting with the following items:

NSBP staff assistance when requested by RefugEEE Consulting and according to NSBP staff availability;



New Arrivals: Planning For Refugee Resettlement

**Budget**

In-kind contributions as outlined in the proposed budget;  
and

A commitment to use our work product in their future  
processes.

Both parties agree to these terms and conditions.

Signed/Dated:

[Redacted signature]

Dan Van Lehman  
The National Somali Bantu Project

Date

[Redacted signature]

Aaron Abrams

3/15/04

Date

[Redacted signature]

Kristin Dahl

3.15.04

Date

[Redacted signature]

Ryan Hunter

03/15/04

Date

[Redacted signature]

Jennifer Kenny

3.15.04

Date

[Redacted signature]

Angela Southwick

3/15/04

Date





## New Arrivals: *Planning For Refugee Resettlement*

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### **Description of Client**

Our client is the National Somali Bantu Project (NSBP), a national organization charged with coordinating and facilitating the Somali Bantu resettlement as an “ethnic self-help initiative.” The project’s mission is to improve Somali Bantu integration into the United States. Currently, NSBP provides cultural trainings for service providers, resources about the Somali Bantu, and resources to the Somali Bantu. This project serves our client by providing additional resources to NSBP to assist the Somali Bantu.

Because our project fits this niche in our client’s mission, the Somali Bantu are a primary stakeholders. NSBP is the client, but the Somali Bantu will be the end users of the information we present. Communities where the Somali Bantu would consider long term resettlement are stakeholders as well.

Daniel Van Lehman and Omar Eno are our primary contacts at NSBP. Mr. Van Lehman has worked with the Somali Bantu resettlement since 1992 when the resettlement focus was on other African locations. Mr. Eno passion lies with human rights issues and is a strong advocate for the Somali Bantu. Monique Dupre, an additional contact at NSBP, is focusing on developing economic opportunities in the area of agriculture.

### **Client Contact information:**

Omar Eno, Director  
Phone: 503.725.8358  
mailto:enoo@pdx.edu

Daniel Van Lehman, Deputy Director  
Phone: 503.725.8587  
dvanlehm@pdx.edu

Monique Dupre  
Moniquedupre@hotmail.com

Fax: 503.725.5162  
www.somalibantu.org

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*Note: All photos taken from the Immigrant and Refugee Services of America Website: [www.refugeeusa.org](http://www.refugeeusa.org)*