

<b>Title:</b>	<b>New Roots for Refugees</b>		
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**Program Code:** BFRDP

**Program Name:** Beginning Farmer and Rancher

**Project Director**

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**Recipient Organization**

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHEAST KANSAS,  
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**Performing Department**

Refugee and Migrant Services

**Co-Project Directors**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Departments**

{NO DATA ENTERED}

**Non-Technical Summary**

Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas began resettling refugees in 1975. Refugees arrive in Kansas City with significant needs: housing, employment, education, English language development, as well as social and emotional support. Refugees are some of the poorest individuals in Kansas City. Eighty percent of resettled refugees still qualify for food stamps after living in the US for one year. In the past year, Catholic Charities staff helped over 300 refugees from Burma, Burundi, Somalia, Bhutan, Iraq and Sudan find employment, largely in meatpacking, warehouses or the service industry. Over 70 percent of individuals placed indicated that they were farmers in their home country. In 2005, a group of refugee women from Somalia, Sudan and Burundi asked Catholic Charities for assistance developing a garden. All of the women were farmers in their country of origin, but lacked the capital necessary to begin working in agriculture in the United States. Ground was broken on the New Roots Community Garden in the spring of 2005 and 15 refugee women grew on small contiguous plots. In 2006, several community gardeners requested help selling at the local KCK Greenmarket. Catholic Charities staff formed a partnership with KCCUA and offered a series of beginning farmer workshops to help gardeners make the transition to selling. Significant barriers to the development of larger scale operations were identified. Aspiring farmers lacked knowledge of US markets, climates and vegetables, had low levels of English language proficiency and had limited experience with business planning and financial management. As interest in farming for profit was cultivated among community garden participants, a need for access to land for small-scale farming was identified through a relationship with the Kansas City Center for Urban Agriculture. The New Roots for Refugees program provides one quarter acre parcels of land for aspiring farmers who meet program requirements. Participant requirements and responsibilities will increase with each year in the program, taking the farmer from a dependent stage to self-sufficiency in five to seven years. Knowledge Based Program Outcomes: Refugee Farmers have increased knowledge of organic farming practices in the United States, Higher levels of financial literacy, Improved English Language proficiency, Increased awareness of marketing opportunities Actions based Program Outcomes: Refugee Farmers sell at weekly farmers markets and average sales of \$150.00 each week, Improved agricultural skills and technologies applied Increases in yield, Refugee Farmers save 20% of sales in bank account to pay for seeds and supplies, Sales Taxes paid, Refugee farmers accept more financial responsibility each year Conditions based Program Outcomes: Increased number of farms and vegetables in Kansas City, Kansas, Refugees economically integrated, Better quality of life for refugee farmers and their families, Higher levels of food security for Kansas City, Kansas Refugee communities have access to culturally appropriate foods

**Accomplishments**

**Major goals of the project**

New Roots for Refugees is a program that develops refugee farmers by building on existing agricultural experience and removing barriers to production, marketing and land ownership. The long term program goal is that refugees would be farming

in Kansas City independently on owned land or through lease agreements. To reach this goal, we have identified three intermediate objectives. 1.) Removal of Barriers to Farming: Refugees arrive with significant barriers that prevent them from considering farm ownership. Most lack transportation and rely on rides from members of their community or the public bus system, which has minimal service routes and hours of operation. Lack of formal education and English language skills prevent refugees from engaging in mainstream markets. New Roots for Refugees is successful because it intensively helps farmers remove these barriers over time. 2.) Increased Agricultural, Financial Management and Marketing Skills: Refugee farmers have significant experience farming in their countries of origin, but are often unprepared to farm in US climates. Existing agricultural skills can be adapted through education and experience growing in the US. Most refugee farmers have little or no formal education. Financial management and business planning are new to most refugee farmers and require intensive, creative education over time. New Roots for Refugees farmers bring marketing skills to the United States- many have sold vegetables in their home countries. Through educational workshops, field walks and marketing practice farmers increase their skills in these target areas. 3.) Access to Start-Up Capital and Land: Refugee farmers arrive in the United States without knowledge of ways to lease land for farming or capital to purchase land. Through non-traditional land lease agreements, savings requirements and assistance in the process of acquiring land, farmers from the New Roots for Refugees program will move off the incubator site onto their own farm. Outputs that support the Removal of Barriers to Farming: 1. Program Recruitment 2. CSA Recruitment 3. Volunteer Recruitment 4. Program Marketing 5. Assistance accessing marketing opportunities 6. Transportation Assistance 7. ESL Classes Outputs that support Increased Agricultural, Financial Management and Marketing Skills: 1. Hands-On Agricultural Workshops 2. 1:1 Field Walks 3. Basic Financial Literacy Training 4. Assistance with Business Planning Outputs that support Access to Start-Up Capital and Land: 1. Offering non-traditional land leases to farmers who complete 15 workshops 2. Provide seeds and supplies at decreasing levels as farmers progress through the program

### **What was accomplished under these goals?**

In the fall of 2012, four farmers graduated off of the training farm to develop their own independent farm site. A woman from Burma purchased a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre lot close to her apartment through the Wyandotte County land bank. A family from Somalia purchased a home and a vacant lot next door. One farmer from Burundi already owned a home with a yard. The final graduate was not in the position to purchase or lease land, and plans on joining a community garden near her home. These four graduates left four  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre plots for new farmers.

In November, we welcomed 4 new farmers to the training farm. Three of the farmers are Karenni from Burma and one is from Bhutan. All of the new farmers registered to pay sales taxes in either Kansas or Missouri and opened up bank accounts for their business.

Farmers sold at 12 weekly farmers' markets throughout the Kansas City area. Program staff provided a high level of marketing support to new farmers and a lower level of support to farmers in their second, third and fourth years. During the 2013 season, 23 farmers (both farmers in training and program graduates) reported sales to program staff. The total was \$156,363, up from \$120,000 last year. All but one farmer met the sales goals stated in our application, and this was due to a family crisis. We group our farmers in classes (first year, second year and so on) with varying levels of support and subsidy. Seeing the different classes of farmers' growth over time has been very encouraging for program staff.

Year in Program

Average Sales for 2013

First

\$3,853

Second

\$5,805

Third

\$8,489

Fourth

\$13,582

All farmers put 30% of their sales in a bank account to pay for sales taxes and the expenses of their business. In our initial program design we said 20% plus sales taxes were to be banked by each farmer. As the farmers and farmers markets that we interact with on a weekly basis have grown and the number of sales tax rates have grown, we decided to simplify and ask all farmers to bank 30%.

Program staff provided support to 16 farmers in training and 8 program graduates throughout the 2013 season.

### **What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?**

In October of 2012, a meeting was held at Catholic Charities to inform those interested in farming about the New Roots for Refugees program. Eight families attended the meeting, which was translated into Karen, Karenni and Nepali. Out of this meeting, 6 farmers scheduled interviews, out of which 4 families were chosen for the program.

Weekly agricultural workshops started the first week of January. The meetings were held on Thursday mornings at the community center at Juniper Gardens, just a block from the farm. The location allowed many of the workshops to be held hands on and in the field, which worked very well. There were 20 two hour workshops throughout the Spring and Summer, and topics included Land Leases, Vegetable Production, Greenhouse Production, Selling at Farmers' Markets, CSA, Soil Building, Water, Paying Sales Taxes, Using Farm Equipment, Keeping

Farm Records, Post-Harvest Handling, Fruit Production, Drip Irrigation, and using Garden Structures.

Along with the workshops, program staff coordinated 4 day long field trips to see mushroom producers, fruit growers, honey hives, and a farm that uses draft horses for plowing.

There were 24 unduplicated farmers that attended workshops.

English language classes started in December and were held until March. These classes were largely taught by volunteers. Classes were once a week for 2 hours. Classes were broken down into 3 groups of varying levels and covered topics critical to business success- time, numbers, weather, vegetable names, marketing, greenhouse vocabulary, and interacting with customers. Sixteen farmers attended English classes in the 2013 season.

As mentioned in a previous report, selling of CSA shares is a generous percentage of our farmers' income. In 2013, program staff sold 61 shares. This is down from 80 shares in 2012. At the end of 2012, we completed an evaluation process with farmer input and decided that farmers in their first year should not have the pressure of providing for CSA customers. The change has been beneficial for farmers and eaters. Our farmers in their second year are able to provide the level of quality that we expect. The cost was \$300/share. We are revisiting this now, and are considering raising this cost a bit as the quality of product has gone up. Our CSA is a huge learning opportunity for refugee farmers. Since our CSA shareholders buy into an individual farmer, the farmer gets the learning opportunity of putting together the bag each week and connecting with a customer over a long period of time.

In 2013, 23 farmers sold at 12 weekly farmers' markets. Most farmers sold at at least 2 markets a week. Program staff assisted farmers in filling out applications and planning for market. During the market season, program staff provided some transportation, translation and record keeping support.

Starting in March 2013, farmers meet bi-weekly in their fields with program staff. This season, we decided to do field walks by language group so that everyone could learn and share together. We lengthened the time of the field walk to two hours to allow for everyone to express their concerns. Field walks were conducted by a trained horticulturalist that helped farmers diagnose problems, plan for the future and discuss marketing needs. Every farmer at the training farm was given 20 field walks throughout the season. Graduates were given monthly site visits from March through October to accomplish the same goals.

In the month of November, program staff met individually for 2 hours with farmers in training and graduates to evaluate the past season and plan for the future. At every meeting, there was a staff person from Catholic Charities, a staff person from Cultivate KC and an interpreter.

#### How have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?

{Nothing to report}

#### What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?

{Nothing to report}

#### Participants

##### Actual FTEs for this Reporting Period

Role	Faculty and Non-Students	Students within Staffing Roles			Computed Total by Role
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Post-Doctorate	
Scientist	0	0	0	0	0
Professional	2	0	0	0	2
Technical	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0.5	0	0	0	0.5
Computed Total	2.5	0	0	0	2.5

#### Target Audience

Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas (CCNEK) has been resettling refugees in the Kansas City, Kansas area since 1975. The target audience for this project are refugees that are new to the United States, but have significant agricultural experience. For the past four years, the largest groups that have been served by the agency are Chin, Bhutanese, Karen and Karenni. We have target all four of these groups for the project. 100% of our target audience is racial and ethnic minorities that are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged.

Our efforts to reach this audience have included formal classroom instruction, hands on workshops, field walks, and field trips to diversified farms throughout our region.

#### Products

{Nothing to report}

**Other Products****Product Type**

Data and Research Material

**Description**

A significant program evaluation conducted by an MPH student.

**Product Type**

Databases

**Description**

A database that is used to track farmers' sales over time. Program staff benefited greatly transitioning from an excel file to an access database that manipulates much easier.

**Product Type**

Evaluation Instruments

**Description**

A self sufficiency matrix was created to track farmers' growth over time. The information that we have collected over a 2 year period has helped us change workshop offerings and diversify products grown by our farmers.

**Changes/Problems**

{Nothing to report}