

Indochinese Refugee Reports

Information Exchange Project American Public Welfare Association
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Local IOWA OFFERS DIFFERENT APPROACH
TO RESETTLEMENT

In 1975, Iowa became one of the first states to contract with the Department of State as a resettlement agency, assuming responsibility for recruiting sponsors and for receiving refugees and providing initial resettlement assistance, efforts traditionally rendered in the states by one or several of eight national voluntary agencies. Iowa's program has been so successful that Governor Milliken of Michigan announced in May of this year that he would develop a similar program in his state.

Initially, Iowa signed an open-ended contract to resettle refugees in increments of 500. By September of 1976, it had resettled 1200. "We thought our job was over then," says Colleen Shearer, Director of the Iowa Department of Job Service. In fact, the state public broadcasting network did a show on the "winding down" of the resettlement program early in 1976.

In each successive year, however, as the flow of refugees to the U.S. accelerated, Iowa amended its contract to bring in more refugees. Governor Ray has made several televised appeals for sponsors for the refugees. And Iowans have responded enthusiastically. Acting as a resettlement agency, the state of Iowa has resettled about 1900 refugees to date. Voluntary agencies in the state have resettled about 3700.

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The Refugee Service Center

The state's resettlement efforts are directed through the Refugee Service Center. Housed in the Department of Job Service, the Center pays rent for its space and is a separate entity. However, the message of locating the Center there is clear: Iowa wants the image of resettlement to be tied to job, not cash, assistance. Shearer states adamantly that any refugee who is resettled in Iowa can have a job.

The Service Center is an independent operating arm of the state, and through Colleen Shearer (who doubles as its director), the Center reports directly to the governor's office. A Foreign Service Officer assigned to the state of Iowa, Ken Quinn, acts as the governor's liaison on refugee matters.

Salaries of the staff of the Refugee Service Center are paid by HEW IRAP funds for reimbursement of administrative costs, which are channeled through the regional HEW office in Kansas City to the Department of Social Services. "We're more than a referral agency," says Shearer. "We really tie together all the loose ends of resettlement in Iowa." In a purchase-of-service contract with the Department of Social Services, the Center agrees to serve all refugees in the state of Iowa. In effect, this involves acting as a resource to other voluntary agencies, since the state of Iowa itself does not resettle all the refugees. "Our assistance to other volags is in the form of a collegial sharing of information," says Marve Weidner, the Center's manager.

The Refugee Service Center coordinates with voluntary agencies in the state through the Iowa Joint Voluntary Agencies (IJVA), an informal coalition of resettlement agencies formed in April of this year. A direct outgrowth of monthly meetings of the IJVA was the establishment of a communication system within the state that gives advance information on the arrival of

specific numbers of refugees at a given time. Voluntary agencies channel information on anticipated arrivals to the Service Center, which then alerts appropriate local agencies and school districts.

So far, the IJVA can boast several major accomplishments. Soon after formation, it requested Marve Weidner to investigate the issue of unaccompanied minors entering that state. Weidner worked with the state department of social services, with probate and juvenile courts and with the attorney general to develop procedures for providing foster care. In coordination with the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, the Refugee Service Center developed specialized seminars for training foster care parents for Indochinese minors.

Another idea spawned by the Joint Voluntary Agencies was also implemented by the Refugee Service Center, through its volunteer coordinator. Throughout the state, volunteers who have been trained to teach English as a second language meet with assigned refugee families several times each week to teach ESL.

The staff of the Service Center has grown steadily. Three supervisors oversee the work of seven outreach workers, all Indochinese, who direct social services, employment, family reunification and education efforts. Each outreach worker is assigned a caseload of families. During the first year that a refugee is in Iowa, the outreach workers do not wait for problems to arise -- on a regular basis, they contact both refugees and their sponsors to offer counseling and support.

A Unique Program

The Iowa program is so unique that reportedly it is known by many refugees in Malaysian camps who request to be placed in that state.

When refugees arrive in Des Moines, they are met by representatives of the Refugee Service Center and by their sponsors. The Department of State, as it does in contracts with all resettlement agencies, issues \$350 to the Refugee Service Center for each refugee it contracts to resettle. Of this amount, Iowa directly disburses \$150 to the refugee on arrival in the form of a check made out

to the sponsor, who signs a receipt agreeing that the money will be used for necessities purchased for the refugee. The sponsors must submit receipts to the Service Center detailing the use of these funds. The remaining \$200 is placed in a general fund that is used when emergency needs arise which neither the refugee nor the sponsor can cover. The Refugee Service Center is accountable to the state controller's office for the use of all funds allotted by the Department of State for the refugees.

"We have two by-words for our refugees: economic self-sufficiency, which can only come through a job, and social self-reliance, which can only be developed through the support of friends who stick by you and help you to cope," says Weidner, who views sponsors as friends. Sponsors are not difficult to recruit in Iowa -- many have assisted more than one refugee or family to adjust to life there.

The Service Center interprets the "moral commitment" that all sponsors undertake as one that demands "giving yourself, your time, your compassion, and your understanding of American culture and life to the refugee family." Weidner explains, "We emphasize that it is a moral far more than a financial commitment, and it is not 'legal.' Sponsors are there to help refugees find housing and jobs and to teach them how to cope and deal with adjusting to a new culture."

While other states were disbursing refugees to various geographic areas, thus disrupting natural support systems, Iowa was instituting "cluster resettlement," placing discrete ethnic groups in certain areas. "The beauty of cluster resettlement is that it makes for smoother transition to a new life," Weidner affirms. Sponsors in Iowa are told that part of their commitment is to encourage refugees to retain cultural practices and values.

Controversial Approach

The program in Iowa has gained a lot of attention nationwide, including a story in the Wall Street Journal. The job-finding program of the Center is very aggressive, starting with sponsors contacting potential employers even before the refugees arrive in the state. Some refugees report to work within several days after arriving in Iowa. And refugees who receive cash assistance are constantly prodded to find work.

Colleen Shearer believes that although the federal government brings in refugees, states must ultimately assume responsibility for resettlement. That belief has stirred considerable controversy among officials in other states who fear that the federal government may share her attitude. Shearer explains some of the rationale for Iowa contracting with the State Department by saying, "It is necessary for those in state governments who will be involved in refugee resettlement to get their hands dirty in order to know exactly what voluntary agencies deal with."

LANGUAGE AND JOB TRAINING PROGRAM UTILIZES ALL RESOURCES

Iowa
In 1975, the Indochinese Education Program was a \$30,000 three-month pilot project in Arlington, Virginia. Funded as an adult education program by the HEW Office of Education, the program offered language training and job placement to fifty refugees. Now serving over 350 adult Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian refugees living in northern Virginia and the District of Columbia, the program offers job training and placement as well as language instruction. In FY'79 it was funded as an IRAP special project by the SSA at \$167,000.

In the first year of operation, Joyce Schuman, Director, "really hustled" to advertise the program in the refugee community, contacting area social service

agencies, school principals, CETA offices, volags, churches, community leaders -- anyone who might deal with refugees. Now the program relies on word-of-mouth notice to get its students. Although there are no income requirements for enrollment, the program is intended for refugees who are unemployed and underemployed.

Case Planning

A refugee who hears of the training first registers with a receptionist and completes a brief background on education and previous employment. The registration form is in English, and multi-lingual staff offer assistance to enrollees who cannot complete the form.

The receptionist sets up an interview with a job counselor/developer, who expands on the background information and formulates some short and long range plans. "We assume everyone wants employment," says Schuman, who says that the job counselor tries to orient a refugee to realistic possibilities while explaining what will need to be done to become employed.

After the initial assessment, most refugees go into language training. Two standardized measurements, the Steil Test and the Illian Oral Interview, are used in conjunction with placement tests developed by the Project to track the students into one of seven levels of ESOL training: Literacy, Beginner I and II, Basic I and II, Intermediate and Advanced. Morning and evening classes are conducted on a 12-week cycle. However, the program operates on an open-entry, open-exit system. Refugees can come into language training at any point in the 12-week cycle and stay on in the next cycle to complete the earlier part of the course. In addition, students may advance from one level to another at their own pace. "The open-entry, open-exit policy is certainly not optimum," says Joyce Schuman. "It creates problems for teachers. But we all agreed

that four months was simply too long for a refugee to sit outside waiting for training. We feel that this is the most responsible way to deal with the situation." To minimize the disruption of classes, new enrollees can enter only on Mondays.

Some students may only need language instruction and job placement assistance. Others will also need vocational training. In addition to regular ESOL classes, students receive vocational language instruction that is geared for their particular area of study. Vocational training programs vary in length, and are scheduled according to seasonal peak periods of hiring for a particular vocational area. For instance, consumer electronic courses end around September, because locally that month is a peak period in hiring for tv repair. Sewing classes conclude at the beginning of seasons, when alterations and orders for new clothes are at a peak.

Those students who have both good English and employable skills require only job placement assistance. Three counselors, two American and one Vietnamese, handle a caseload of about 150.

Team Approach

An "employability team," consisting of a language and vocational instructor, a job counselor and an educational coordinator, follows every refugee through the program. "The role of the educational coordinator has been key," says Schuman. A job counselor screens a refugee before sending that individual to a specific program; it is the educational coordinator who makes the final decision of who goes into training. Once a refugee is in training, the Director and the coordinator stay in touch with the teacher, and the job counselor makes regular visits to the training site to monitor progress.

There are eight vocational training areas specifically for Indochinese students: auto mechanics, building trades, clerical skills, consumer electronics, keypunch, printed circuit board assembly,

sewing and typing. All classes are conducted in English, but translators are available when needed.

The choice of vocational training areas is not as limited as it sounds. Because it was initially funded through the HEW Office of Education as an adult program in Arlington County, the Indochinese Education Program is housed in the Arlington Career Center, a modern public school facility established in 1974 under a bond issue. Indochinese students whose language skills are sufficient can be referred into other training programs already available in the Arlington Career Center, including food service, cosmetology, professional child care and others.

Says Schuman, "Frankly, one of the reasons for our success is the set up here and the location. We're close to good public transportation, and the refugees love the building." In addition to an environment that is conducive to positive feelings about the program, equipment is available to students through the Career Center that could not be purchased through allowable expenditure of IRAP funds.

Another reason for the success of this project is that Director Joyce Schuman is always looking for ways to expand the opportunities of her students. For instance, students in the program are advised when they are eligible for participation in other existing county programs. In addition, although the project is almost entirely funded by IRAP, Schuman has developed five sources of supplementary funding. She has located one employer who is willing to fund language training for his Indochinese employees to increase chances of advancement, and she intends to tap more industrial sources of funding in the future.

Joyce Schuman was the Director of CETA programs in Arlington County prior to taking her position as director of the Indochinese Education Program. In testimony before the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law in May, she revealed that the

cost of job placements in her program is \$1,043 compared to the cost of CETA placements, which average approximately \$4,000.

Since 1976, over 3,000 refugees have participated in some part of the Indochinese Education Program. Job developers have placed about 600 refugees in permanent full-time jobs thus far. The figure sounds low, but Schuman states that some students find their own jobs, and it is difficult to trace "indirect" placements. Initially, a job counselor aggressively seeks possible placements for refugee students. If the student's skill level is low, the job developer might accompany the refugee to the interview and establish direct contact with the employer.

The approach is different when a refugee who is placed wishes to change jobs or loses a job (a rare occurrence) and comes back for placement assistance. Says Schuman, "We fully believe that everyone has to learn to negotiate the job market for themselves." Consequently, counselors teach refugees who come back for job upgrading how to identify what they want, how to make contacts, and how to assess a market.

"Interestingly, the starting salaries for persons completing vocational training programs is about the same as starting salaries of those placed on jobs without any specific training," Schuman told the House Judiciary subcommittee. Several factors influence this statistic. One is that her program has no follow-up after 90 days following placement, and there is no way to compare the salary increases of trained persons to increases for those persons placed in entry level jobs without training. And many refugees may not have been hired at all without the training, or may have been placed in dead-end, low-level jobs. Finally, for many educated and professional refugees, training is seen as a way to acquire marketable skills that permit immediate economic survival and social adjustment, and this benefit cannot be measured.

"Ours is a task-oriented program. The bottom line is employment," Schuman states firmly. However, emotional problems do

sometimes have to be dealt with, even if coincidentally. "Nobody moves from a position of weakness. We deal with refugees as though they can do anything."

Personal Involvement

This sounds like a hard-line approach. It conceals a very personal involvement with refugees on the part of all staff members. Activities do not begin and end with those services specified as Indochinese Education Program. For instance, a hard-working staff plans field trips on special occasions. On July 4, the staff organized a large picnic for the refugees and their families, rented buses for transportation to Roosevelt Park in Washington, D.C., and planned an afternoon of events. When Joan Baez sang at a concert for boat refugees in front of the Lincoln Memorial in July, transportation was arranged for refugees who wanted to attend.

And efforts to enhance the adjustment of refugees extends beyond the provision of social activities. In an orientation for new students, the staff supplies information on health and housing services and area schools. In addition, Schuman has arranged for dentistry students at Georgetown University to provide a free screening clinic at the Center every four months. Refugees receive information on dental hygiene and are referred to area dentists for treatment. Public health officials regularly offer tb screening at the school.

A counselor contacts students who have left the program at 30, 60 and 90 days for follow-up. There is no absolute rule of thumb on this procedure, however, because Schuman has found that some refugees resent the contact after a certain period. The average length of stay in the program is six months, but there is no fixed time for closure. Those who wish to return for additional training or for job placement assistance may do so.

Editor's note: If your special project

has developed unique methods, materials, or approach in English language instruction or job training, please write in and let us know. Specific details on local initiatives can be helpful to other projects across the country.

Recent Developments

REFUGEE ACT OF 1979

Senate Version

On August 3, Senators Cranston and Hayakawa of California introduced an amendment to S.643 which, if passed when the bill is considered by the full Senate, will extend the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP) for two years. After that period, welfare costs would be paid by the federal government only during the 36 months following a refugee's date of entry. Amendment No. 391 was ordered to be printed on August 3 in the Congressional Record (S11703).

In mark up of the Refugee Act, the Senate Judiciary Committee lifted the original bill's two-year limitation on federal reimbursement for social services to refugees. However, the two-year limit remains on cash and medical assistance. The new amendment would provide continued reimbursement for public assistance for all refugees for a period of 24 months. After that time, 100% reimbursement would apply only to those refugees who have been in the U.S. for three years or less.

In introductory remarks, Senator Cranston noted that the amendments would give state and local governments two years to assess the effectiveness and cost of their programs. "Ours is a proposal to postpone for two years the very basic question of who should pay for those refugees who clearly have not been assimilated and who have become welfare cases." By rough estimates, extending the IRAP program would cost about \$67 million in FY'80 and \$110 million in FY'81. Cranston noted that without the amendment, those costs would be carried by state and local property taxpayers, with a disproportionate burden being assumed by California taxpayers due to a concentrated refugee population in that state.

House Version

It has been learned that the draft version of H.R. 2816, soon to be marked up by the full Judiciary Committee, contains an authorization for \$200 million for FY'80 and '81 that consolidates social services and special projects funding for Indochinese refugees. Under the amended draft of the bill recently marked up by the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and International Law, social services would still be 100% federally funded, but not through the reimbursement procedure currently used. Instead, a coordinated social service policy would be directed nationally. Each state would submit proposals for services, and the monies would be channeled through the award of contracts and grants. Title XX agencies as well as private voluntary agencies would have to apply for the use of these funds.

HEW could allocate the funds as necessary throughout the two fiscal years, and additional funds could be sought through a supplemental appropriation.

CONGRESSIONAL TEAMS TOUR
SOUTHEAST ASIA

Following the July United Nations meeting in Geneva on the refugee crisis, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill appointed a nine-member congressional team to tour Southeast Asia during the August recess and report to the Congress and the President on the results of the fact-finding mission. The major purpose of the six-day trip, headed by Representative Benjamin Rosenthal (D-N.Y.), was to assess to what extent Vietnam is adhering to the commitment it made in Geneva to stem the flow of refugees and to cooperate with the UNHCR in family reunification efforts. Accompanying Rep. Rosenthal were Robert Drinan (D-Mass.), Thomas Downey (D-N.Y.),

Richard Nolan (D-Minn.), John Hammer-schmidt (R-Ark.), Lyle Williams (R-Ohio), Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), and Antonio Won Pat (D-Guam).

Between August 5 and 9, the team visited nine refugee camps in four countries. In addition, it visited Hanoi, despite furor caused by remarks Rep. Drinan made in Hong Kong in reference to Vietnam's "new economic zones."

A draft report on the trip is currently being prepared, and information will soon be available on recommendations being made by the team. It has been learned that the team will suggest an alteration in the stated mission of the Seventh Fleet in sea rescues, which Vietnam has perceived to be a military show of force rather than a humanitarian gesture. Actually, international law requires all vessels to render available assistance to boats in trouble, and a softened statement may soon be made on the role of the Seventh Fleet aiding refugees at sea.

On the day that the Rosenthal team left Hanoi, another delegation, headed by Lester Wolff, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, arrived in that city. The purpose of the 18-day tour of this team is broader than that of the earlier delegation, and includes visits to Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Moscow and Hong Kong, as well as to Bangkok and Hanoi, to discuss various regional concerns.

In Southeast Asia, the team was to discuss the implications of recent developments between Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union, as well as the effects of the refugee flow into ASEAN countries. The accounting of Americans still listed as missing in action was an important focus of discussions in Hanoi. Also on the intended agenda were follow-up on the Geneva meeting, Vietnam's relations with China and Russia, and its policies in Laos and Cambodia and intentions toward ASEAN countries.

The team received some surprises in Hanoi. Acting Foreign Minister Ngyuen Co Tach spoke openly of normalization of relations, stating firmly that, con-

trary to denials from State Department officials, the U.S. actively resumed normalization talks in June of this year. Earlier talks were discontinued in late 1978 due to the refugee problem and Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia.

Accompanying Wolff on the tour are Tennyson Guyer (R-Ohio), Andy Ireland (D-Fla.), David Bowen (D-Mass.), Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), Robert Lagomarsino (R-Cal.), Clarence Long (D-Md.), James Scheuer (D-N.Y.), Pete Stark (D-Cal.), Billy Lee Evans (D-Ga.), Robert Dornan (R-Cal.) and Carlos Moorhead (R-Cal.).

A more detailed account of the findings of both congressional teams will be provided in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.

Resource Exchange

LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT MAKES PAPERS AVAILABLE

The Indochinese Mental Health Project of the International Institute of San Francisco has produced several papers of interest. They are: "Modern and Traditional Medical Practices of Vietnam," by Le Tai Rieu, M.D.; "Training of Indochinese Mental Health Workers" and "The Trauma Syndrome," both by Don Cohon, Ph.D.; "A Selected Bibliography of Migration and Mental Health," by the Project staff; and "A Summary of I.M.H.P. Grant Proposal and Training Curriculum."

The Project, funded by HEW through IRAP special project funds, trains Indochinese to function as paraprofessionals in the mental health field. Students attend seminars, observe mental health professionals at work, and are eventually placed in field settings for practice.

The Project recently completed a paper entitled "A Preliminary Analysis of Indochinese Refugee Mental Health Clients," based on 54 cases closed

during 1977 and 1978. Because the project has developed computer-coded recordkeeping forms for reporting client information, the data for the analysis was readily available.

For the study, a cross tabulation was done based on the length of residence in the U.S. and the presenting problems. Data indicated that during the first year, socialization concerns were the primary reason for seeking counseling. Around the thirteenth month and for a period averaging two and one-half years, 92% of the refugees suffered from depression. The data indicates that once basic needs were met, deeper adjustment problems began to surface.

In 89% of the cases, supportive psychotherapy was the major treatment modality. This supports studies done with Hungarian and other refugees which have indicated that active and passive listening are frequently sufficient to help a refugee cope with loss. Some educational therapy, or the direct transmission of knowledge (about culture and adjustment), was necessary in 63% of the cases, and in 37% of the cases social help was provided.

Forty-six percent of the refugees studied received counseling for less than three months, and 64% for less than five months. The median number of visits was three. This supports literature which suggests that those who are unfamiliar with psychotherapy seek help to meet specific needs, not to learn about internal realities, and thus receive treatment for a short period of time.

Copies of this study, and of other papers available, can be obtained through Mr. Don Cohon, Project and Training Director, Indochinese Mental Health Project of the International Institute of San Francisco, 2209 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California 94108. (Phone: 415/673-1720.) A sample of the computer-coded client intake and closing form is also available.

VIETNAMESE, CAMBODIAN TYPESETTING
SERVICES *print*

K & S Enterprises in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania typesets newsletters, brochures and books in Vietnamese and plans to offer Cambodian typesetting within the next three months. The firm also provides translating services and can dub videotapes and produce slide shows with synchronized sound.

K & S largely deals with clients on the East Coast, but is prepared to expand operations. Mail express costs are assumed by the firm.

For additional information, contact Charles Kospecki at (412) 621-7450 or write K & S Enterprises at P.O. Box 7164, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15213. The street address is 3603 Bates. As of September 30, the company's trade name will be "The Multilingual Communications Corporation."

STATE AGENCY PUBLICATION *print*

The New South Carolinians, a magazine published monthly in Vietnamese and English by the Indochinese Refugee Agency of the South Carolina Department of Social Services, is a publication of interest to both refugees and those working in refugee resettlement.

While some of the topics covered are specifically of interest to those living in South Carolina, there is enough general information to warrant out-of-state subscriptions. The 10-20 page publication covers such issues as tax laws affecting refugees, landlord-tenant relations, use of credit, American traditions, health care, education and general adjustment information.

The New South Carolinians may soon be published bi-weekly. It is available at no charge through:

The South Carolina Indochinese
Refugee Agency
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 1520
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

MENTAL HEALTH PUBLICATIONS *print*

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, through a grant from HEW, has published two companion volumes on Indochinese mental health and adjustment services. Both books provide a directory to mental health services in HEW Region III. The "manual" section of each contains information that would be relevant to refugees and resettlement professionals in all geographic regions.

One book, "Indochinese Adjustment Services Manual and Directory," is written for mental health workers. The manual describes psychiatric consultations in a refugee camp and provides a time table of adjustment to life in the U.S. Historical and cultural information on Laos and Cambodia is presented, and various cross-cultural differences that affect counseling efforts are discussed.

The second book, "A Quadrilingual Manual and Directory," subtitled, "A Mental Health Guide for Southeast Asians," is written in Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian as well as English. The manual section discusses concepts of mental health and mental illness, symptoms of adjustment problems, and American mental health attitudes and services.

Both books are available at no charge through:

Mr. Barry Miller, Ph.D.
Director, State Bureau
of Research and Training
Office of Mental Health
Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric
Institute
Henry Avenue and Abbottsford Rd.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19129

----- NOTICE -----

ARE WE ON YOUR MAILING LIST? IF NOT, WE'D
LIKE TO BE!

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Department of State gave the following figures for Indochinese refugees in Thailand camps and boat refugees in other Southeast Asian countries as of July 31, 1979. It should be noted that the figures do not reflect the number of refugees arriving in various countries who are not registered in UNHCR camps.

<u>As of July 31, 1979</u>	<u>Current Camp Population</u>	<u>Refugees Arriving</u>	<u>Refugees Departing</u>
Thailand	169,981 (8,274 boat)	land: 3,000 boat: 600	land: 3,838 boat: 594
Malaysia	61,559	1,559	5,590
Hong Kong & Macao	69,917	9,193	796
Indonesia	55,000 estimated	11,000 est.	401
Japan	531	17	47
Philippines	5,794	599	97
Singapore	1,153	1,240	142
Others (Unspecified)	966	-	-
	TOTAL: 364,901	TOTAL: 27,208	TOTAL: 11,505