

A Community Center and Storybooks: Case Studies in Collaboration



Crystal Pennington

Marketing Director, Refugee Language Project



Outline

1. Introduction to Refugee Language Project
2. The PLACE Multicultural Community Center
3. The Heritage Language Storybook Project
4. Q & A

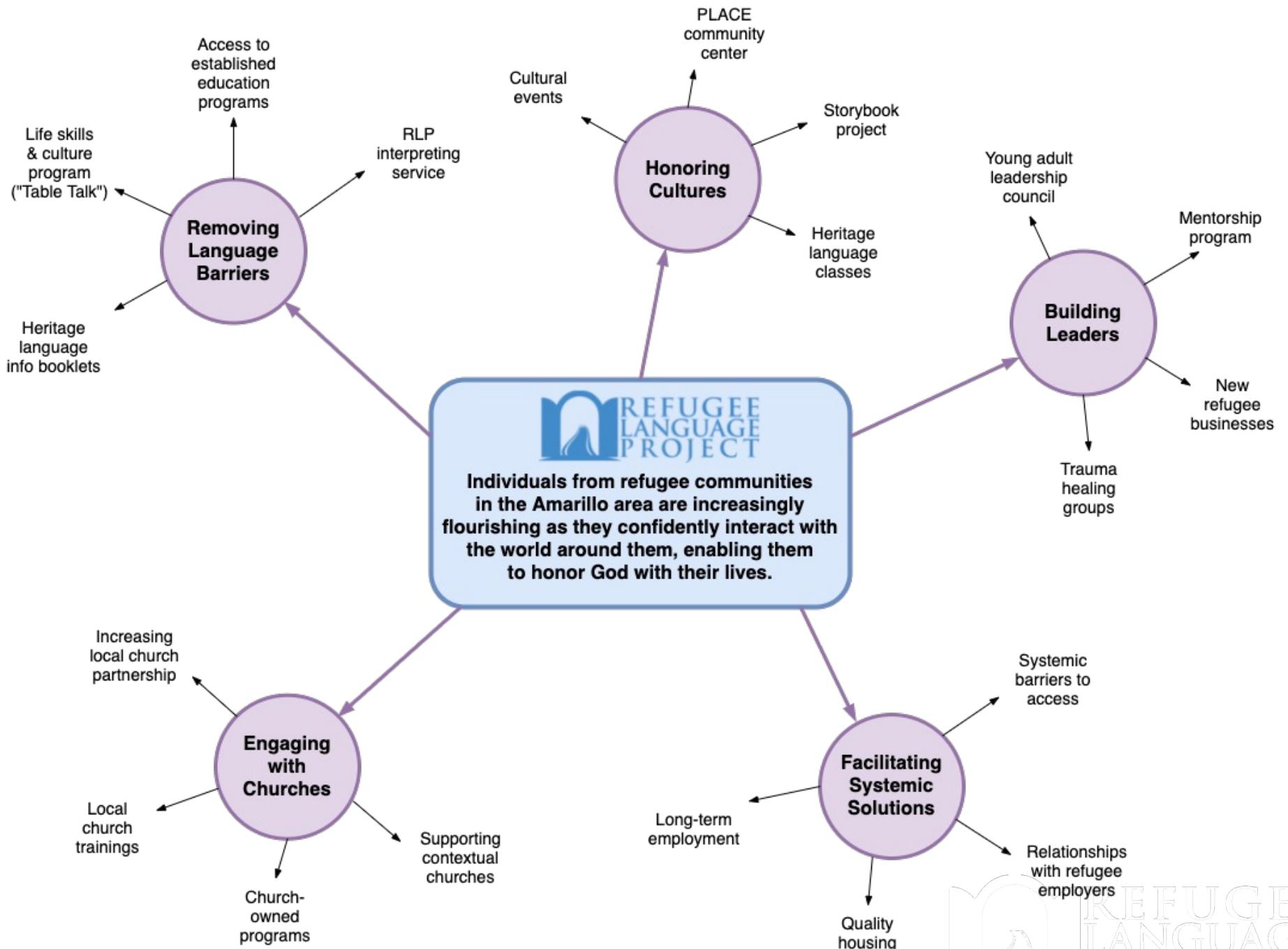


What is Refugee Language Project?

RLP exists so that...

Individuals from refugee communities in the Amarillo area are increasingly flourishing as they confidently interact with the world around them, enabling them to honor God with their lives.









Lessons Learned from PNG

- Educational misfits & the life skills needed in the new environment.
- Confidence: from the home to the wider world

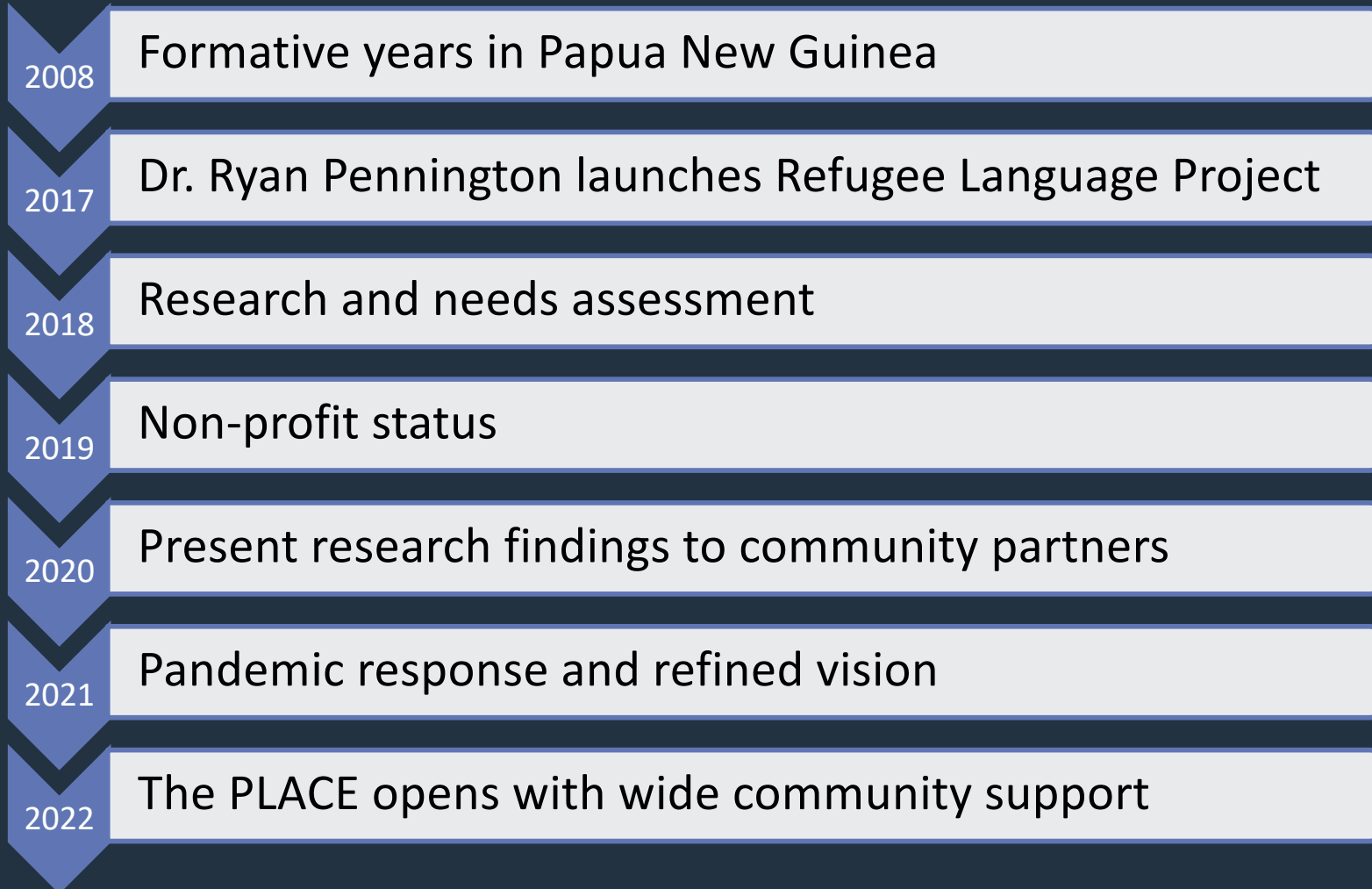








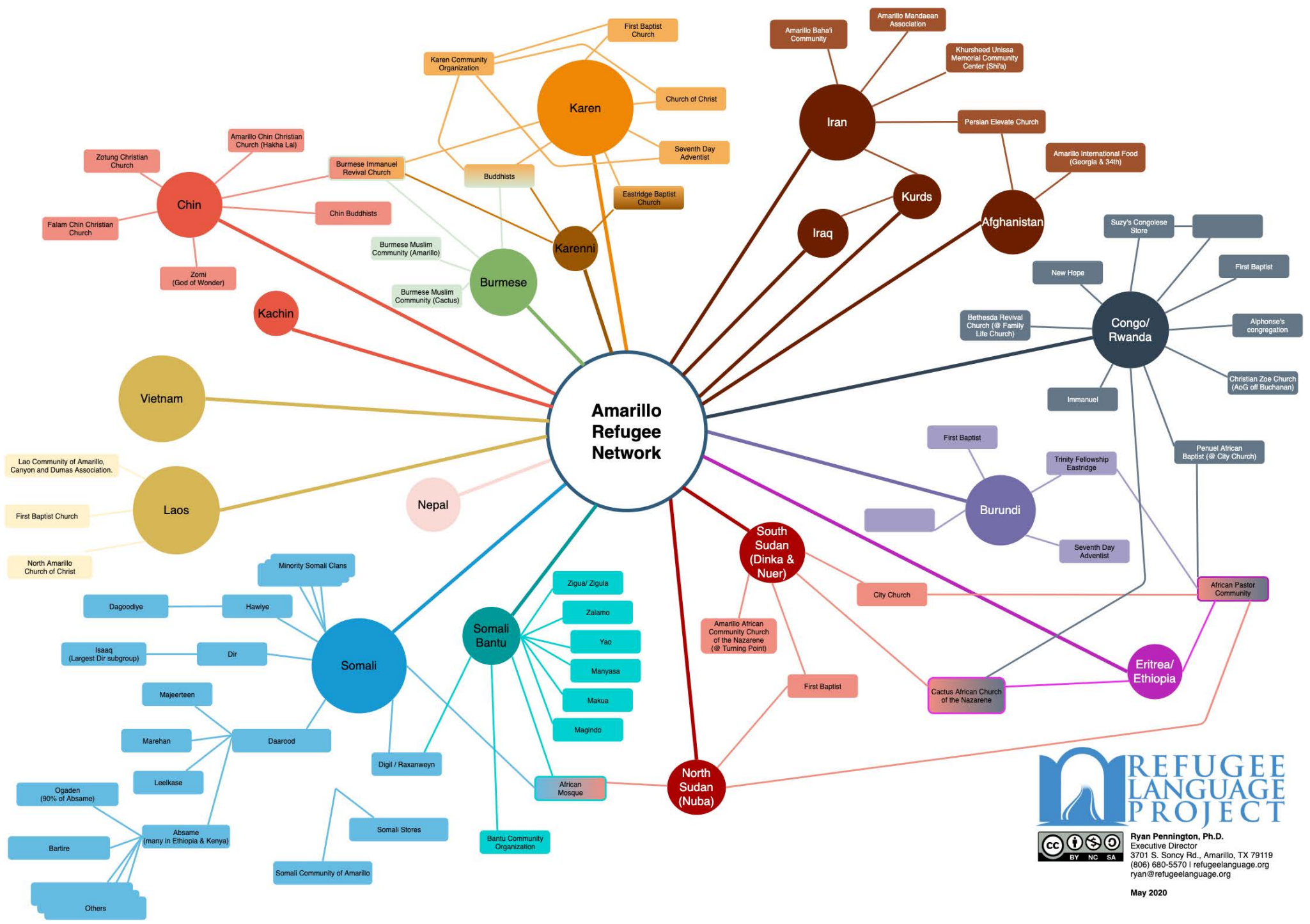
Timeline





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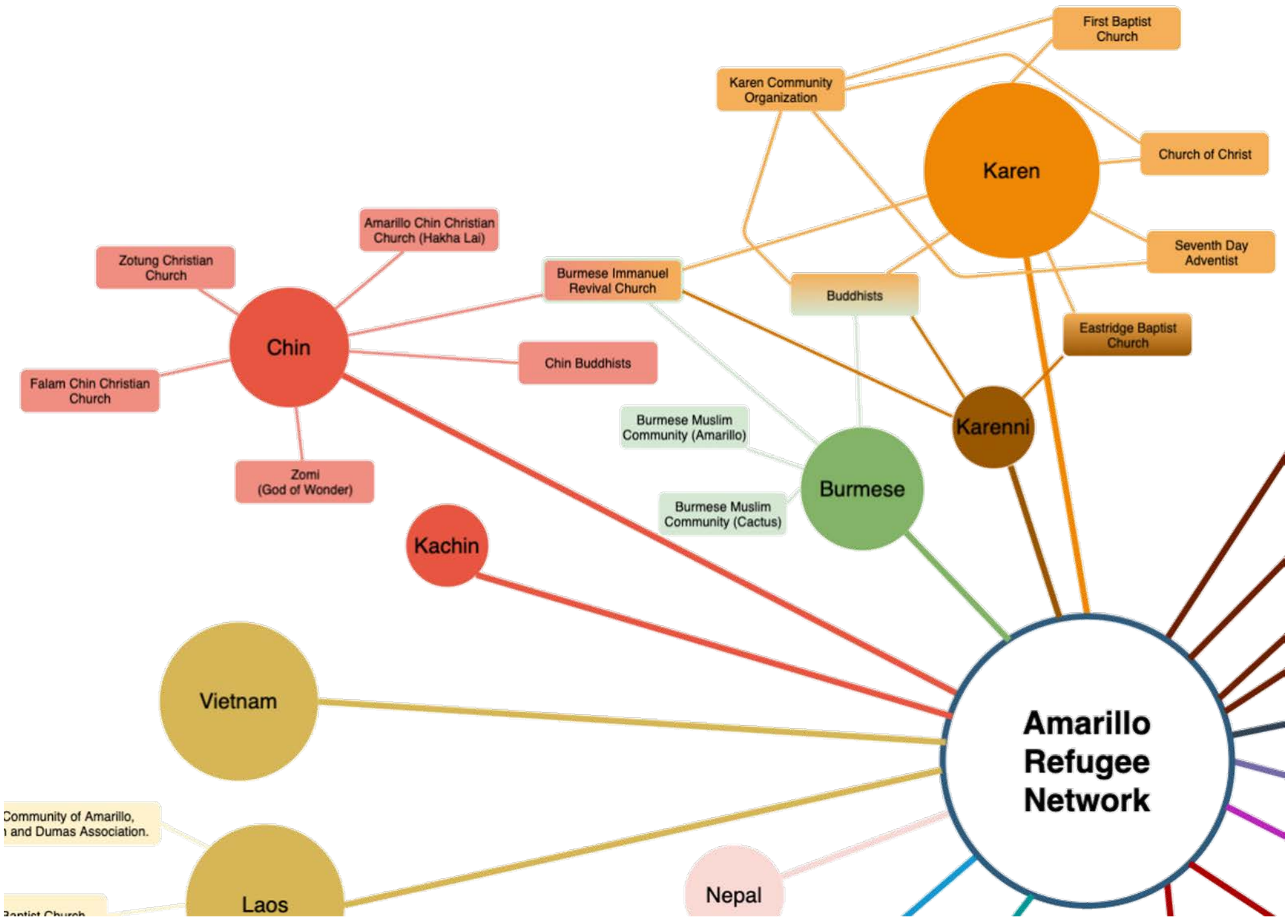
February 2022

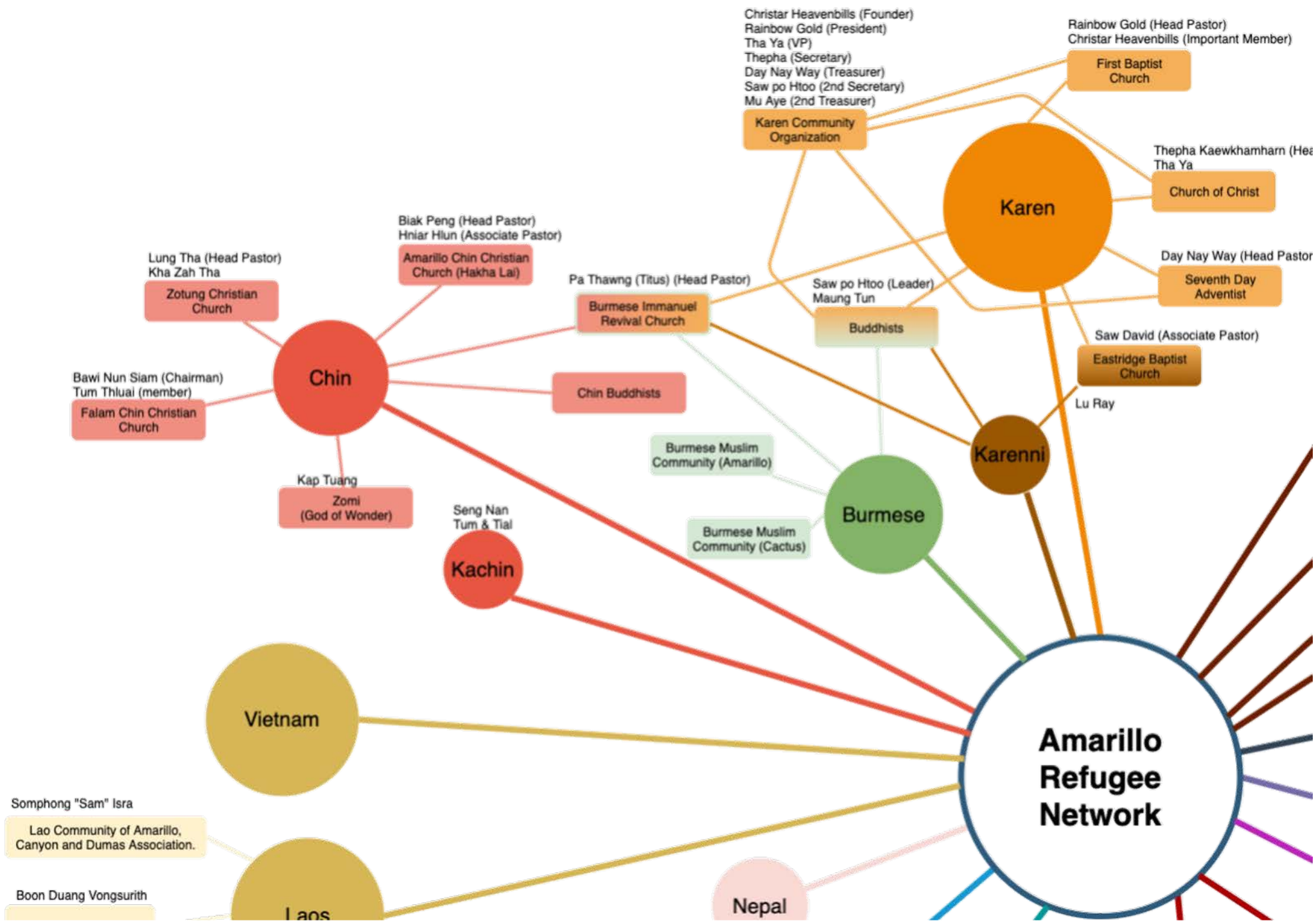


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May 2020





Four Community Dialogues

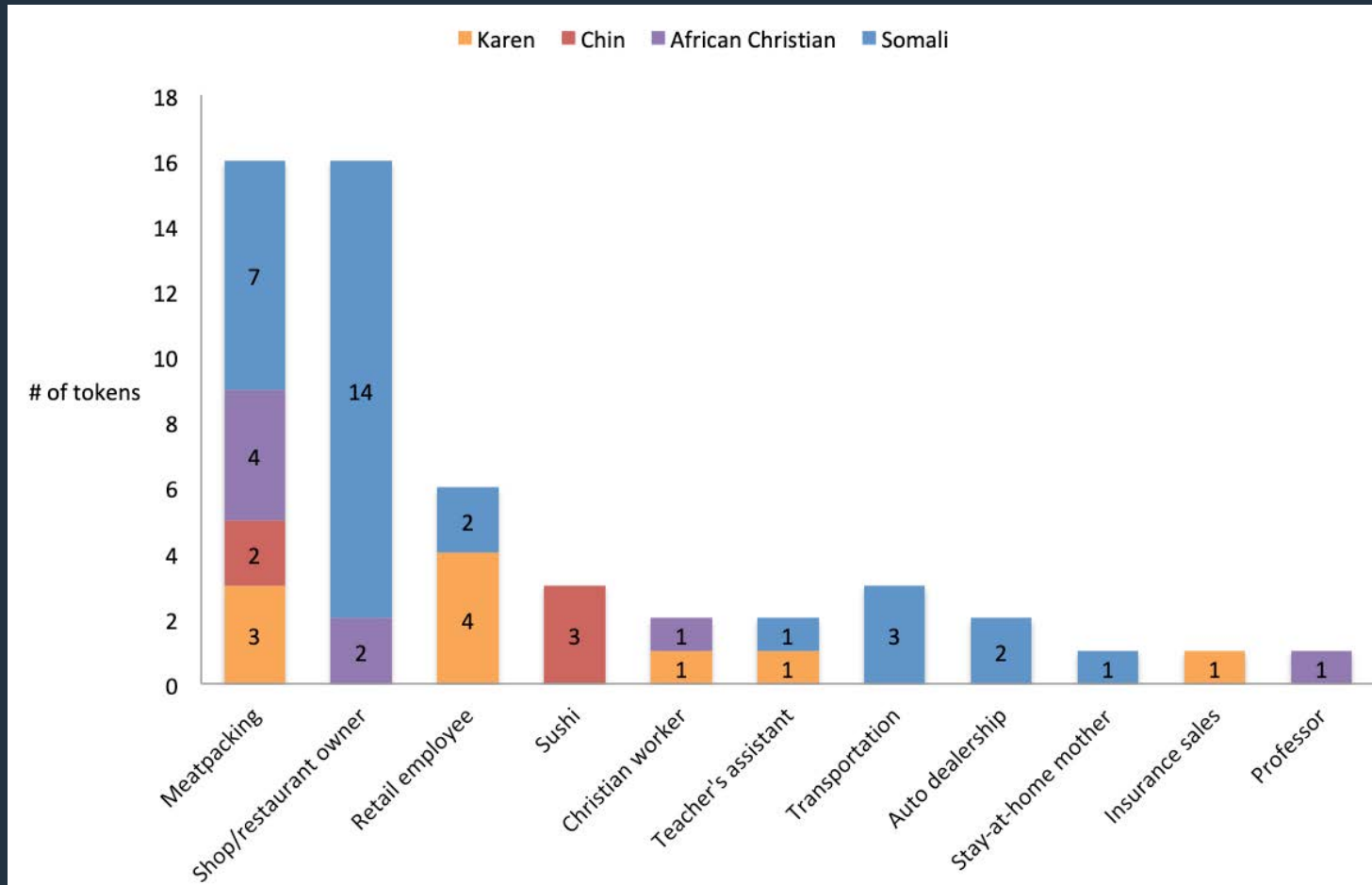
- Meetings with 4 separate refugee communities to identify specific problems and consider concrete solutions.
 1. Chin (Sep 2019)
 2. African Christians (Oct 2019)
 3. Karen (Oct 2019)
 4. Somali (Feb 2020)



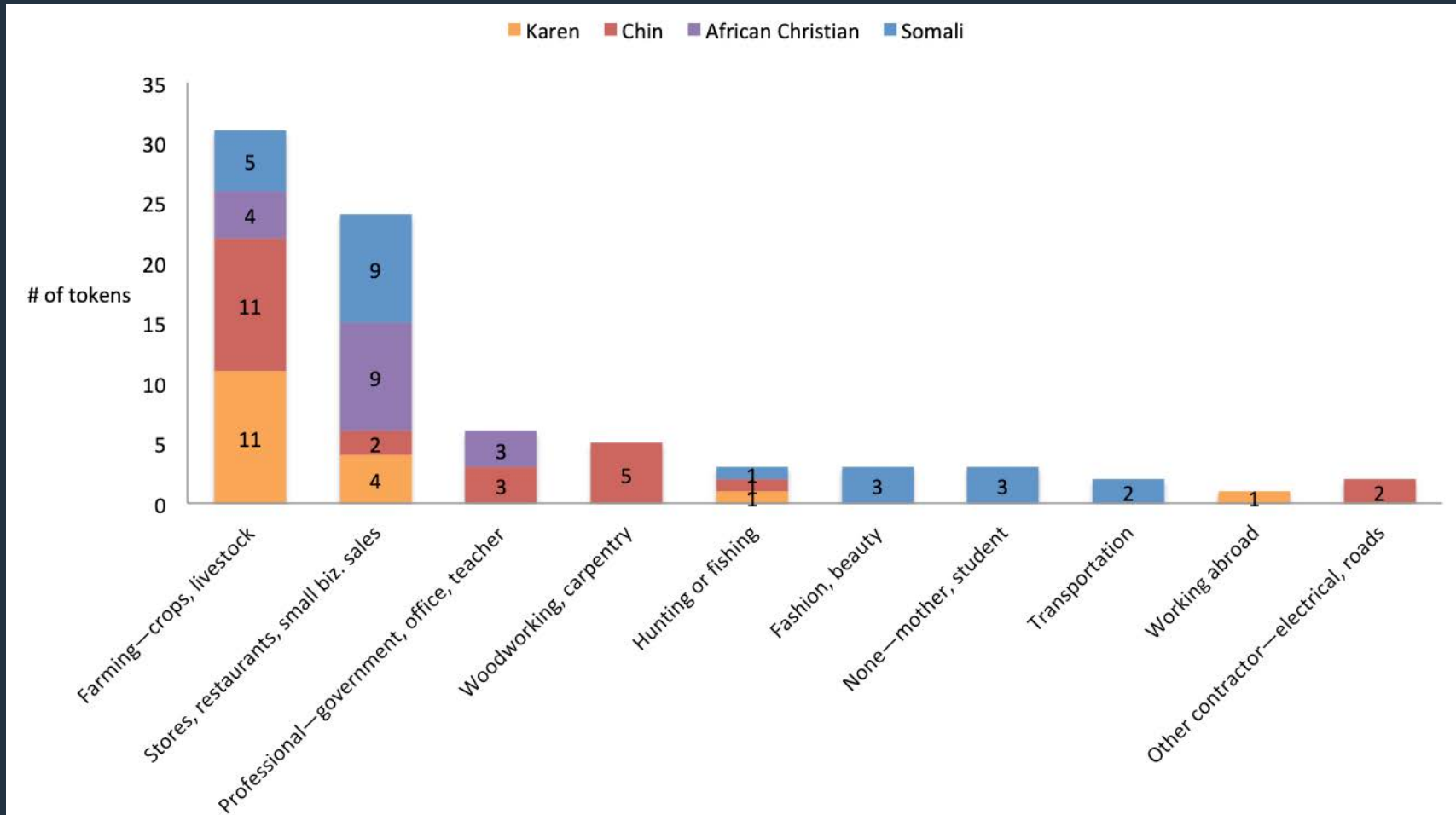




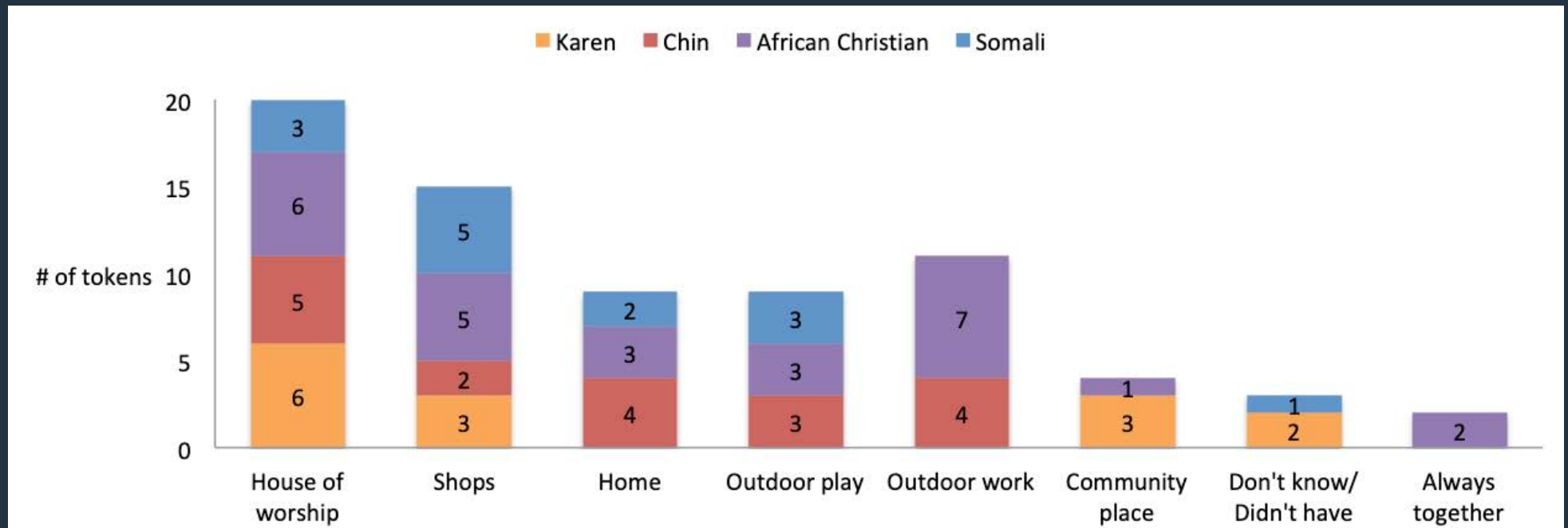
In Amarillo, how do you earn income?



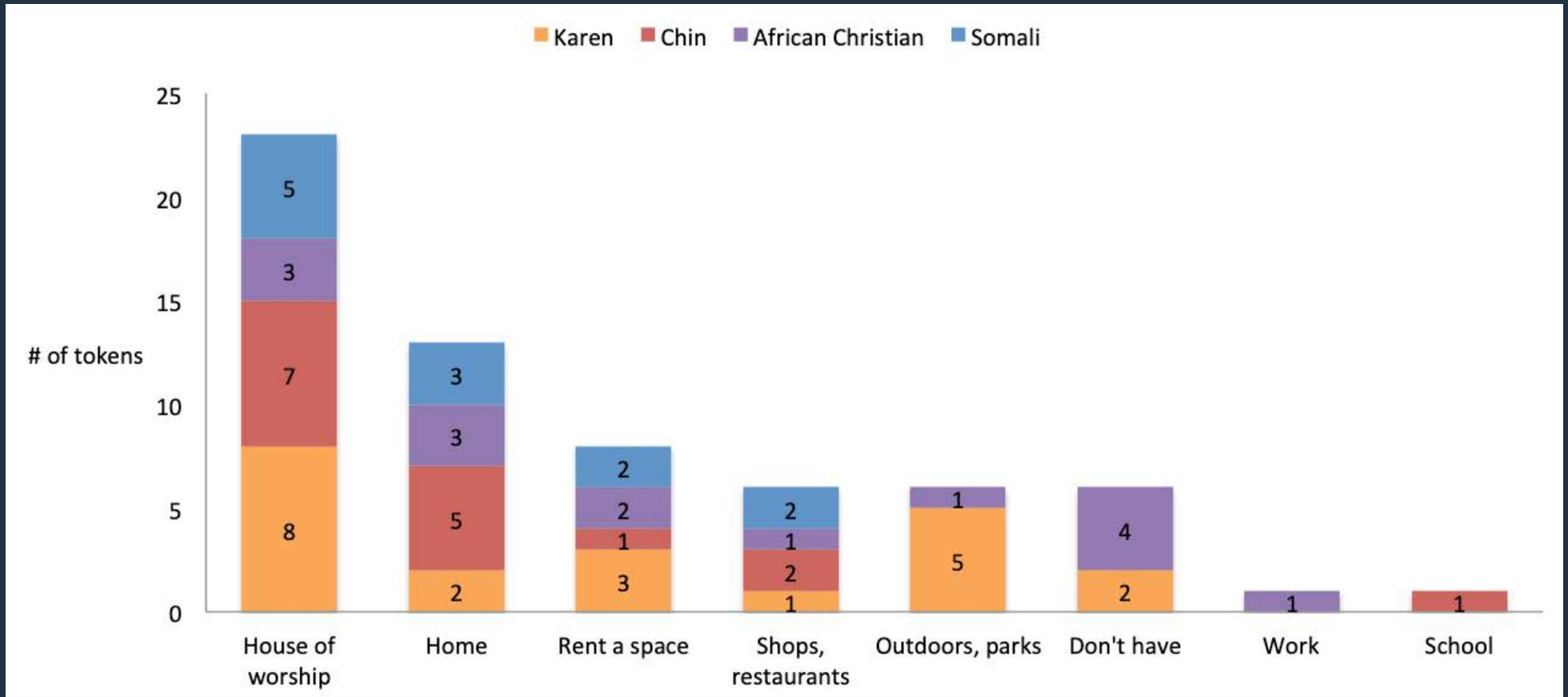
Back home, how did you earn income?



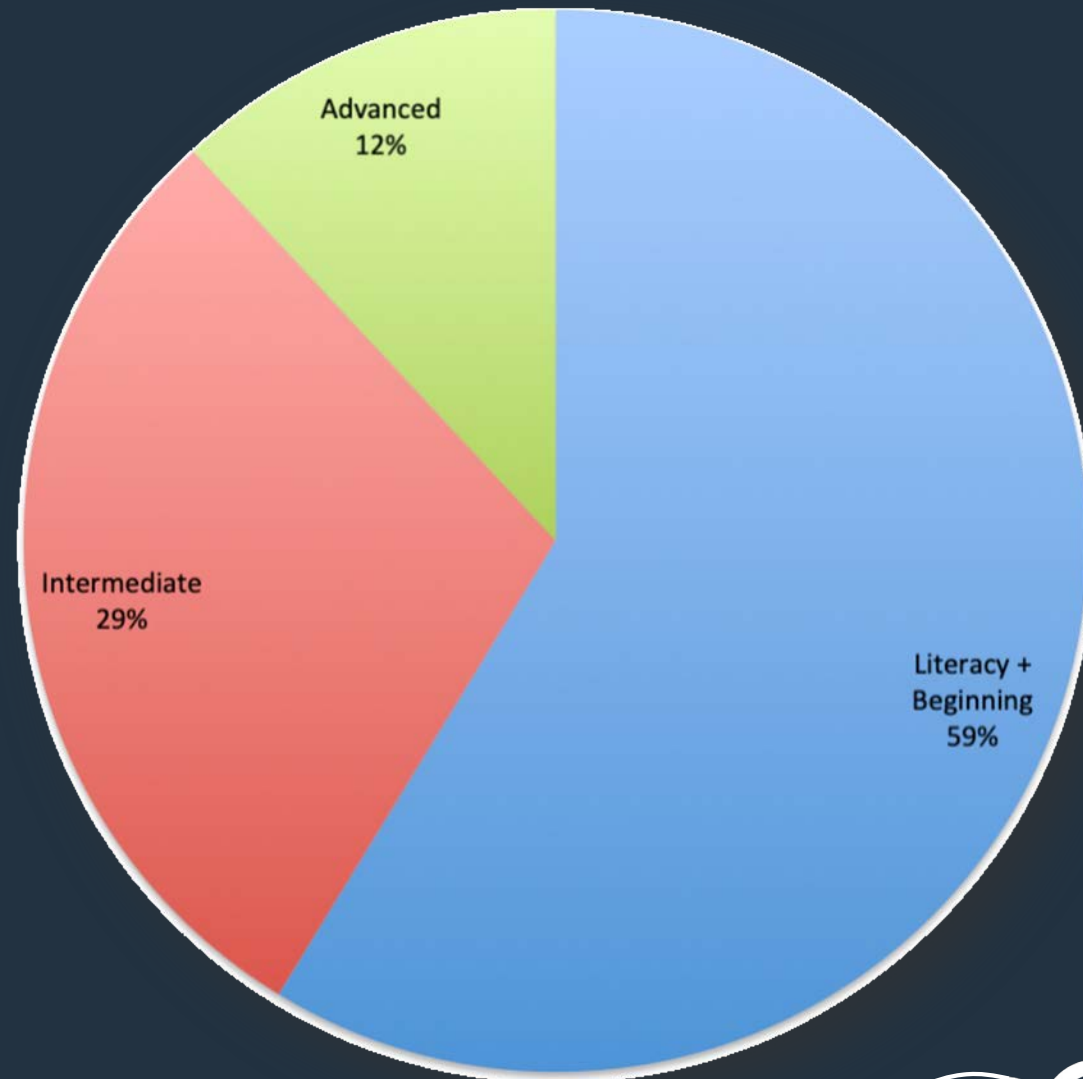
Back home, where did you gather with others?

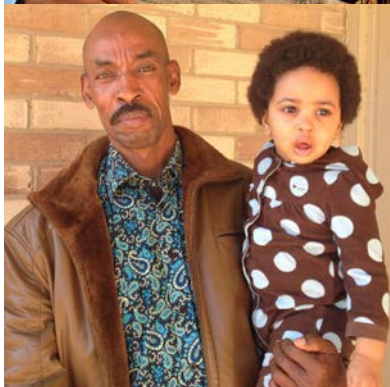
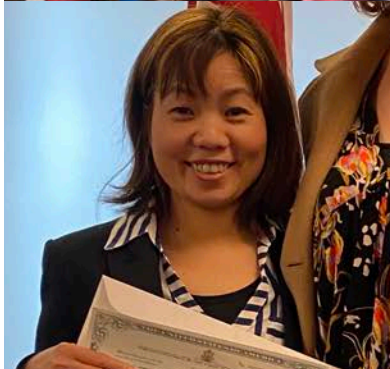


In Amarillo, where do you gather with others?



Adult ESL Enrollment





Amarillo Refugee

— 2021 —

State of the Union



Multicultural Community Center

We recommend that local partners collaborate to open a community center where...

- cultures can be celebrated,
- community gatherings can be held,
- classes & tutoring can be offered, and
- a handicraft market can be operated.

Business Program

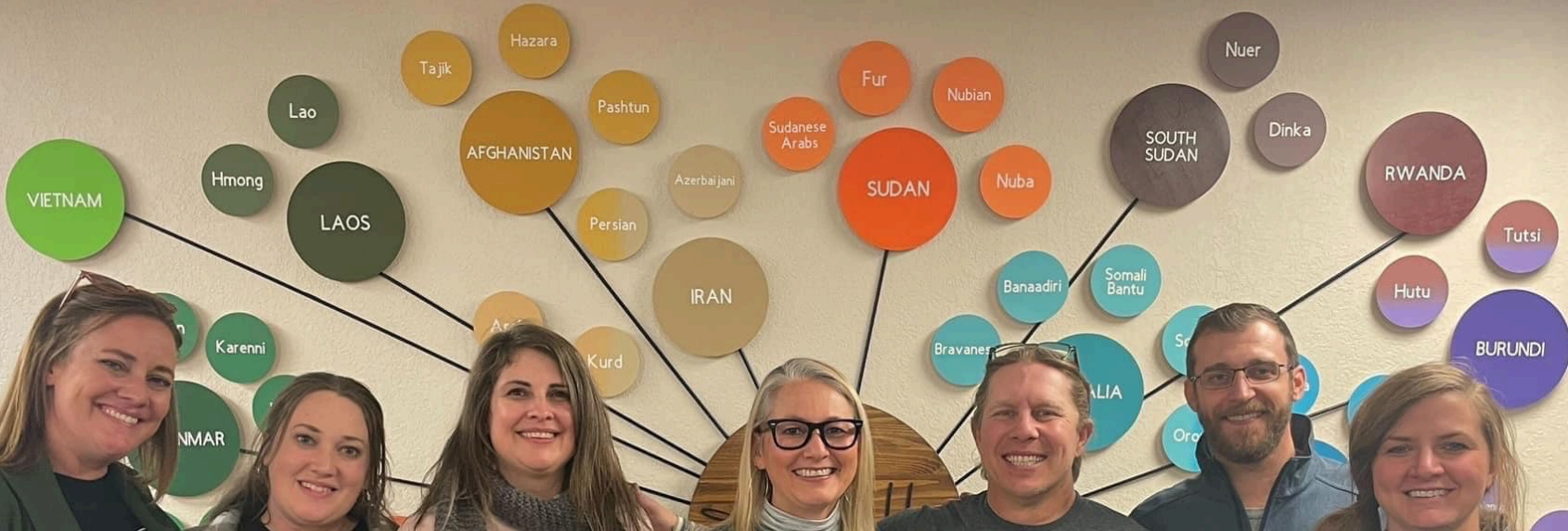
We recommend that new partners rise up to engage refugee communities by forming a business development program where...

- new businesses are incubated,
- business mentorships are fostered,
- new farming initiatives can be explored, and
- business English can be taught.

COLLABORATION #1: NON-PROFITS

THE PLACE COMMUNITY CENTER





the place for **PL** language **LA** art **AC** culture & **EE** economic growth

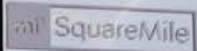
500

PLACE

Monday-Thursday
9:00am-5:00pm
Friday
9:00am-12:00pm



REFUGEE
LANGUAGE
PROJECT



SquareMile

WE FIND...
...IN LOVE!



Examples

Can you think of an example where the program is...
beneficial to society, but it does not have a significant...
impact on the environment?

peace
justice
equality
freedom
democracy
human rights
environmental protection
social justice
economic justice
cultural diversity
gender equality
interfaith dialogue
global cooperation
sustainable development
digital rights
data privacy
artificial intelligence
cybersecurity
space exploration
climate change
renewable energy
nuclear energy
biotechnology
nanotechnology
space exploration
artificial intelligence
cybersecurity
space exploration
climate change
renewable energy
nuclear energy
biotechnology
nanotechnology

TUESDAYS
6:00 - 7:30 PM
THE PLACE
WITH PLACE, BREAD,
BOWLS, PRACTICE,
TEA, COFFEE & SNACKS,
CHILDCARE

PLACE

PLACE

PLACE

PLACE

PLACE













How does it work?

1. By word of mouth, refugees discover the PLACE and drop in when they need something.
 - They want to join an English class.
 - They want to use our free WiFi.
 - They want help filling out a job application.

How does it work?

2. A host welcomes them, serves tea & snacks, and connects them with what they need.
 - Conduct informal tutoring sessions.
 - Communicate about our English classes which feature instructors who speak their languages.

How does it work?

3. Welcome their family to our evening Table Talk program to practice English over a potluck dinner.
 - Allows members of the broader community to come into contact with them, building rapport and confidence, and breaking down barriers.



How does it work?

4. Identify their specific goals and connect them with a trained volunteer mentor.
 - RLP is serving ?? recently-settled Afghans in our mentorship program.
5. Highlight their skills publicly, enabling them to be seen as leaders.



1. Samuel gets a mentor.



3. Samuel becomes a leader.

Refugee community breaks barriers amid pandemic



2. Samuel gets recognized.

- **Mentorship program framework**
 - Focused on language and integration.
 - Language: Functional lessons and literacy
 - Integration: Friendship, Culture, Life Skills, Citizenship, and Leadership

The Place for...

LANGUAGE

Refugee Language Project

ART

We Find in Love

CULTURE &

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Square Mile

We have pursued a plug-and-play approach, where area partners contribute their own programs alongside one another to keep the PLACE serving the community in a holistic way.



the place for language **PLACE** art culture & economic growth

Multicultural Community Center



**COLLABORATION #2:
WORKING WITH REFUGEE
COMMUNITIES**

**THE HERITAGE LANGUAGE
STORYBOOK PROJECT**



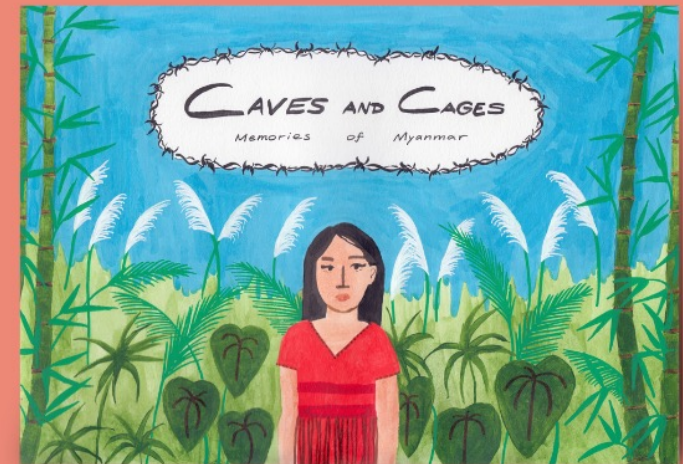
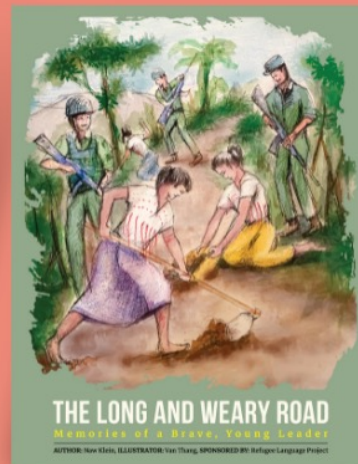
Mother Tongue Education

We recommend that mother tongue education be promoted wherever possible by...


- providing literacy materials in heritage languages,
- supporting grass-roots educational initiatives (such as Chin classes), and
- encouraging adults to become literate in their first languages in order to successfully bridge to English.



Heritage Language Storybook Project







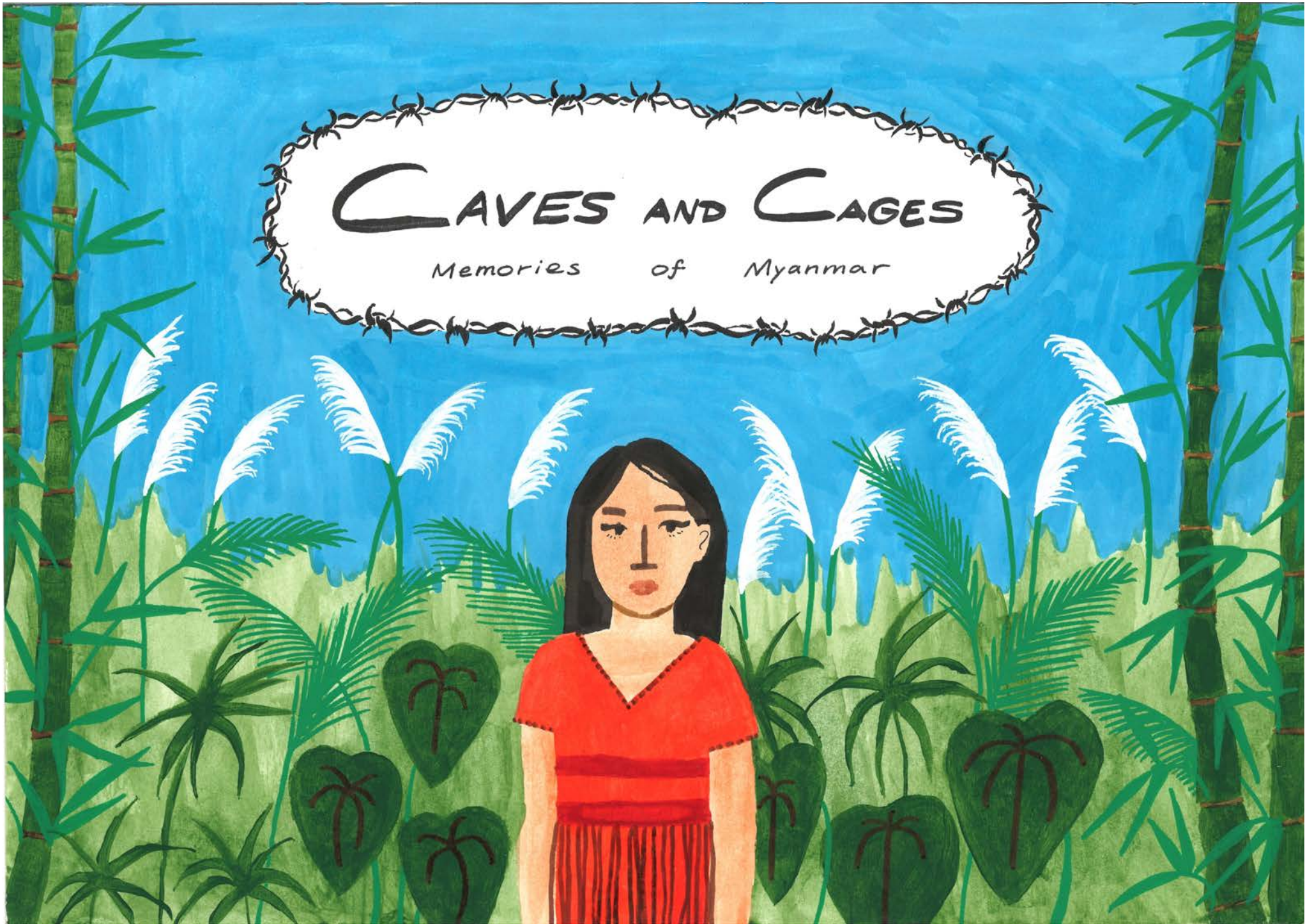
ဟံၣ်လၢကိၣ်ယၢကျိအံၣ်
AT HOME ON THE KYER YA KLO

ဘၣ်တကွဲးအီလၢ-နီၣ်ပဲၣ်
Written by Naw Peh

ပုတုတၢ်တီ-
ဝါပၢပၢဒီးနီၣ်ပဲၣ်
Illustrated by
Wah Per Per & Naw Peh

CAVES AND CAGES

Memories of Myanmar



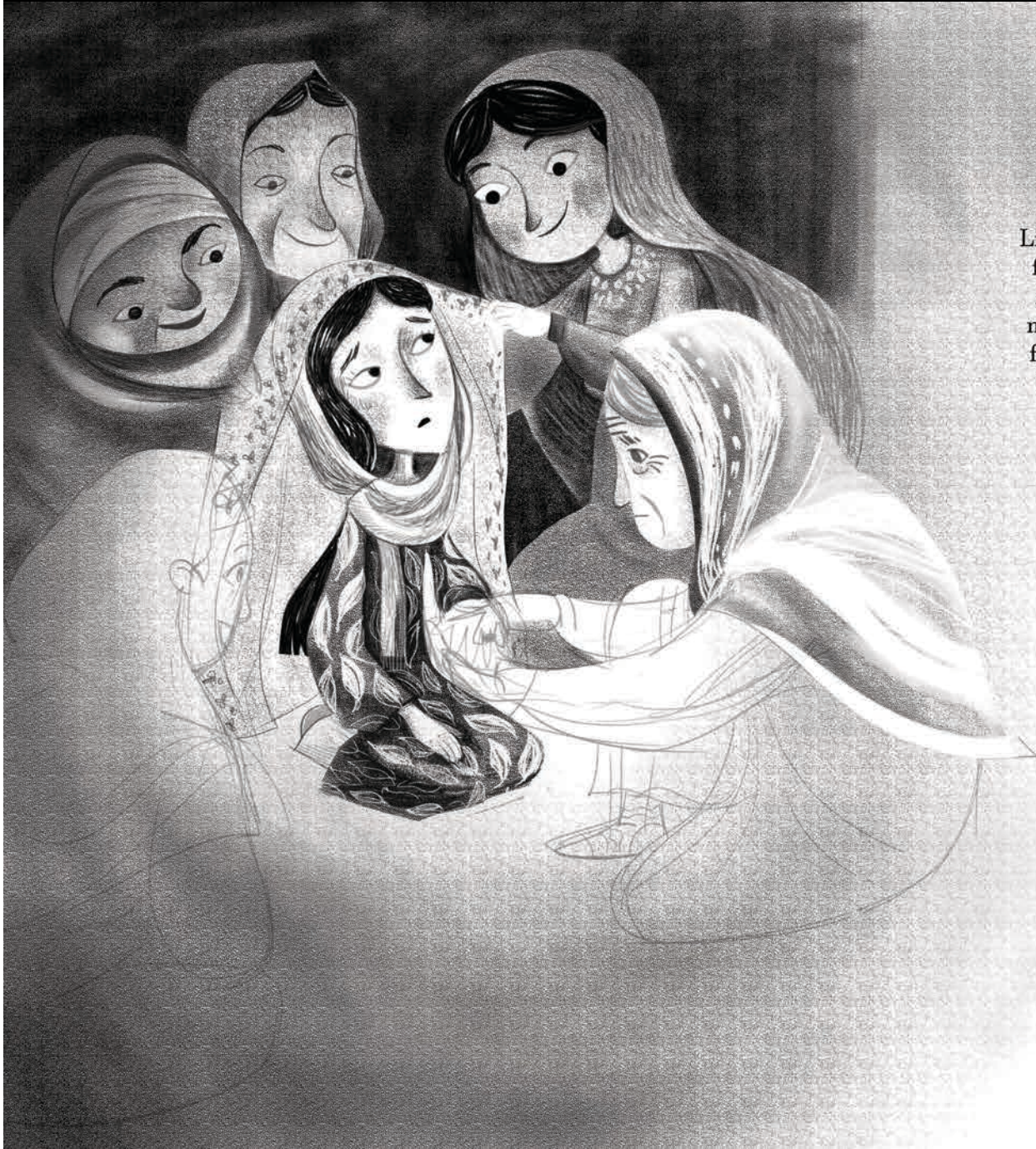


THE LONG AND WEARY ROAD

Memories of a Brave, Young Leader

AUTHOR: Naw Klein, ILLUSTRATOR: Van Thang, SPONSORED BY: Refugee Language Project

REFUGEE
LANGUAGE
PROJECT



Like any young Afghan girl, I had many dreams for my future. My family was poor, and many Afghans maintained the cultural tradition of marrying their young daughters. Such was my fate at 14 years of age (check with Haleema). My family forced me to marry a close family friend whom I used to call uncle. He was forty-year-old.

My engagement was full of sadness, loneliness, and unbearable cultural traditions (other than marrying at a young age, are you referencing any other cultural tradition here?). The mountain of grief weighed heavily on a slender young girl like me as I wept silently. I became more depressed with each passing day and my throat became swollen from pain and grief. I was a victim of a bone-burning poverty on the one hand and the shadow of the ignorance of my people on the other, yet the only prescription for my grief was to go to the graves of my noble father and dear uncle, who were recently murdered by the Soviet Red Army. My people believed that the best place to cure pain and sorrow is at the graves of your ancestors. At their tombs, I prayed, wailed and cried out to God.



Thank you!

Scan to go to our website or
purchase storybooks!



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