

Strategies for long-term self sufficiency

Jo Anne Schneider
University of Maryland College Park
jschneid@anth.umd.edu

Research Projects

- Refugee Resettlement in Philadelphia (1981-1988)
- Social Capital and Welfare Reform (12 studies from 1992-2002 in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania)
 - 5 studies of low income families use of social service systems (3 quantitative, 2 qualitative)
 - 4 qualitative studies of organizations social service activities
 - 2 studies of social welfare systems involving faith communities, government and non-profits
 - Census mapping project in Philadelphia
- Religion and the New immigrants (Foley/Hoge 2002-2003)
- Faith and Organizations Project (2004-2009)

Types of TANF recipients

- **Low Skilled Workers:** *About 50% move between low wage, service sector employment and welfare, often in 1 to 2 year cycles. Usually high school or less and skills training*
- **Limited Work Experience:** *Between 15 and 25 %*
- **Displaced Workers/Stable Working Class:** *Stable work experience who have lost their jobs due to downsizing. About 10-20% were displaced workers. This group most easily finds jobs.*
- **Rising Educated Middle Class:** *People who are the first generation in their families to attend college and/or move into professional or managerial work.*
- **Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees:** *Anywhere from 3 to 9 % in my studies. It includes people with a wide range of skills and educational backgrounds who are newcomers to the U.S.*

Émigré Populations

- Puerto Rican citizens
 - Legal immigrants and their citizen children
 - Refugees
-

Attributes in Successful Transitions

- Connections to appropriate jobs
- Mentoring
- Gradual training combined with OJT
- Guidance away from poor advice/peer pressure to take paths that don't work

Myths re Barriers to Self-Sufficiency

- English language ability is the chief barrier to working
- Any entry level job will lead to self-sufficiency

Programs that don't work

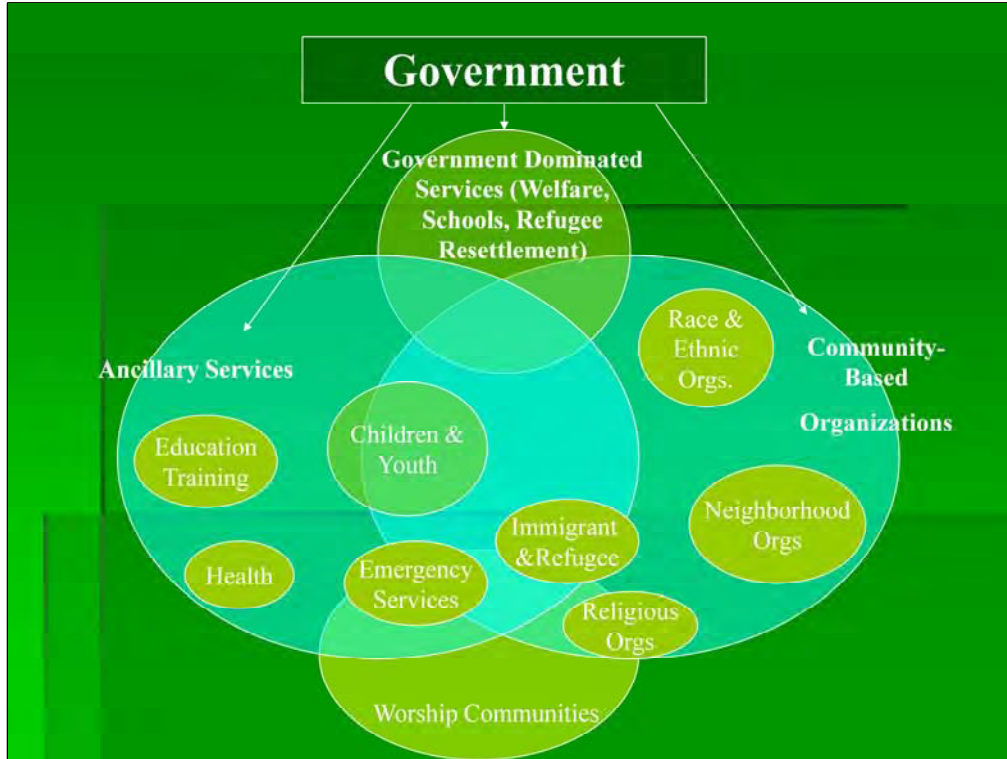
- General job search/readiness programs
- Job clubs
- Basic ESL (beyond 3 month intro)
divorced from work experience or specific
skills training

Programs that Work

- Workplace English combined with targeted training and OJT
- Mentoring programs - particularly for professionals
- Developing long term strategies with steps that combine training and appropriate work experience

Serving Families, Not Individuals

- Household/family structures often different from nuclear family
- Need to help find services for extended networks to prevent employment barriers
- Begin by asking who the individual considers their key network
 - Sources of support
 - Obligations



Developing Resource Networks

- Identify sources of support (churches, nonprofits, travel agencies, businesses, social groups)
- Develop networks with leaders in these organizations
- Identify successful immigrants/refugees from this country as mentors/advisors
- Develop expanded support networks

Developing Employment

- Identify employers interested in niche employment that has a career trajectory
- Develop targeted training for those jobs, with last few months including internships/OJT
- Identify buddies/mentors for new employees placed with these employers
- Create ongoing workplace English for at least 6 months after employment starts
- Maintain case management after placement

Employing Professionals

- Identify employers in this field with interest in refugee/immigrant employees
- Identify professional mentors
 - Previous immigrants
 - Professional associations
- Ask organizations/individuals to develop slots, suggest training
- Combine initial intensive English with work experience
- Encourage training, but only combined with internships/work experience