



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

Preparing Displaced Refugee Farmers for Vegetable Production in the Midwest

Linda Seyler, Director
Global Garden Refugee Training Farm

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development
Program Award No [2014-70017-09396]



Project Audience

- Who are you aiming to help?
 - Where are they: Chicago, IL
 - Who are they: Refugees primarily from Bhutan and Burma who operated traditional subsistence or market family farms in their home country
 - Our project focuses on small-scale, mixed, organic vegetable production
 - Participants have extensive traditional expertise, but are new to climate, market, and other conditions in the United States



Partners/Collaborators

- Who are the key people on your team?
 - Linda Seyler, Global Garden Refugee Training Farm, lead organizer and instructor
 - Hasta Bhattarai, Global Garden Refugee Training Farm, Project Assistant & Interpreter
 - Yvette Kyaw, Global Garden Refugee Training Farm, Outreach and Interpretation
 - Windy City Harvest, Instruction in Farm Business Management
 - Multiple refugee resettlement agencies: Outreach and recruitment
 - Cambodian Association of Illinois class meeting space



Key Approach(es)

- Formal 12-hr courses delivered as six weekly classes
 - Crop production, Pest mgmt, Farm Business Mgmt, Season Extension
 - Language interpretation is required
 - Refugees bring unique combination of expertise and knowledge gaps to classroom
 - Teaching methods must be adapted to needs of non-literate students
 - Difficult for refugees to commit to this time frame
- Bi-weekly 'all-farmer' meetings



Overall Target Outcome

By the end of this project, we will have helped:

- 20 refugees (100% socially disadvantaged) will participate in classes
- 15 participants will increase production through better adaptation of traditional farming and marketing practices to the local conditions
- 5 early-stage refugee farmers will increase income from sale of produce grown at Global Garden Refugee Training Farm.



What do you have to share?

- Teaching methods for non-English-speaking and low-literacy beginning farmers
- Specific cross-cultural concerns
- Urban farming practices



What do you hope to learn from other projects?

- Visual teaching materials that will work with refugee farmers
- Evaluation tools for field production and learning that do not rely on literacy



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Linda Seyler, Director
Global Garden Refugee Training Farm
Chicago, IL

globalgardenfarm@gmail.com

www.globalgardenfarm.com