Preparing Displaced Refugee Farmers for Vegetable Production in the Midwest

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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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