

Characteristics of Incoming Refugee Populations

Incoming Population	Family Structure	Religion	Geography & Population	Language & Literacy Levels	Highlights
Iraqi ^{1, 2} Informal Greeting: Hello, Hi [mar Haba]	Patriarch Respect for Iraqi family structure is important	Christian and other 3% Islam 97% Dietary Restrictions: • No pork products Holy Days: • Month of Ramadan; Eid al-Fitr (Feast ending Ramadan – Little Eid) • Eid al-Adha (festival of sacrifice after pilgrimage to Mecca-Big Eid)	Official Name: Republic of Iraq Capital: Bagdad Refugees arriving through Syria, Jordan and Egypt Country's ethnicity: Kurds 15-20% Sunni Arabs 20% Shiite Arab Majority	Arabic, Kurdish (Kurmandji, Sorani, Bahdini), Assyrian, Armenian Country Literacy Rate 40% Most have had exposure to English. Challenges: handwriting, capitalization and punctuation, pronouncing vowels and the letter R, Questions, "should and would" be verb in present-tense sentences.	Functional "Abdullah" (male Iraqi): Collaboration, hierarchy, duties, hospitality and dignity Functional "Amy" (female Iraqi): Independence, competence, individualism, equality, assertiveness The degree to which shame, face and honor are core cultural values will determine how important it is to choose an indirect method of communication Food: rice, vegetables and lamb
Burmese ³	Patriarch Family as the focus Extended family is important Hierarchical family structure Obedience to family & elders Personal needs are secondary to family needs Average family size 5+	Muslim 11% Christian 52% Buddhist 30% Animist 7%	Myanmar (Burma) Refugees arriving from camps in Thailand Ethnicity in camps: Karen 80% Karenni 15% Burman 2% Great ethnic diversity	Karen Karenni Burmese	Social control through duty and obligation Almost half of the camp population is under the age of 18, thus Most have lived their entire lives in the camps
Burudian ⁴	Patriarch Strong social ties Average family size 5+	Muslim 2% Christian 96%	Burundi Refugees arriving from camps in Tanzania Ethnicity in camps: Hutu	Kirundi Swahili French (well educated) Literacy rate among arrivals: 20%	64% of the population is primary age children Most have lived their entire lives in the camps
Bhutanese ⁵	Patriarch Family as the focus Extended family is important Hierarchical family structure Obedience to family & elders Personal needs are secondary to family needs Average family size 8	Hindu 60% Dietary Restrictions • No beef products Christian 1%-7% Buddhist 27% Kirat 10%	Bhutan Camps in eastern Nepal Ethnicity in camps: Nepalis 97% 35% of the population is under the age of 18	Nepali 35 of the population has a functional knowledge of English	Food: rice, lentils, curry, chicken, goat Bhutanese community in the US is very small. As a result, almost none of the refugees have ties in the US.

¹ Unraveling Iraq: Practical Challenges in Resettling Iraqi refugees by Issam Smeir, LCPC consultant

² Center for Applied Linguistics Refugee Fact Sheet Series No. 11

³ Burmese Resettlement from Thailand UNHCR Quick Fact Sheet, November 2006

⁴ Center for Applied Linguistics; Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Backgrounder No.2, March 2007

⁵ Center for Applied Linguistics; Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Backgrounder No.4, October 2007