## Characteristics of Incoming Refugee Populations

|---------------------|------------------|----------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| **Iraqi**<sup>1,2</sup> | Patriarch        | 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**<sup>3</sup> | Patriarch        | 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 |
| **Burundian**<sup>4</sup> | Patriarch        | 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**<sup>5</sup> | Patriarch        | 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. |

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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