

တၢ်ကရၢကရိအတၢ်အိၣ်ဖှိၣ်လၢပုၤကီၢ်ပယီၤဖိ
မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသားများ အားလုံးပါဝင်သော လူထုတွေ့ဆုံပွဲ
Community Meeting for People from
Burma Living in Chapel Hill & Carrboro



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL



Organized by a partnership of the UNC School of Public Health,
the Orange County Health Department, and Lutheran Family
Services in conjunction with the Forum Planning Committee.

Saturday, April 21, 2007
5:00-8:00pm
Carrboro Elementary School
Carrboro, NC



Acknowledgements

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- * The community of people from Burma living in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.
- * Community members and service providers who graciously took time to be interviewed.
- * The Community Forum Planning Committee members.
- * Our translator/interpreter rockstars—you know who you are.
- * Our community preceptors, Susan Clifford and Meaghan Tracy.
- * The UNC Teaching Team, Eugenia Eng and Michele Lanham.
- * Past AOCD teams who provided resources.
- * Our amazing volunteers.
- * Our friends and family who have supported us throughout this process.



Special Thanks

Special thanks to the local businesses and individuals who provided food, funds, and door prizes:

Akai Hana	La Panaderia
As Seen on Martha	La Vita Dolce
Azure	Lime and Basil
Ba-Da Wings	Lumina Theatre
Balloons and Tunes	Maria Winslow
Brixx Wood Fired Pizza	Mediterranean Deli
Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar	Merlion Restaurant
Carolina Inn	Michael Czeiszperger
Carolina Packaging	Nested
The Children's Store & Toy Corner	Open Eye Café
China Wok	Penang
Floral Expressions & Gifts of Chapel Hill	The Print Shop
Food Lion	Rebecca and Joel Wright
Foster's Market	Salutations
The Franklin Hotel	Spice Street
Harris Teeter	Starbucks
Hunam	Sue Brewer
India Palace	Tandoor Indian Restaurant
Jack and Jane Naftel	Thai Palace
Jujube Restaruant	Town Hall Grill
Kim Hawks	The UPS Store
	Whole Foods Market
	Zosephine



Contact Information

Community Preceptors:

Susan Clifford, MSW, MPH
Sr. Public Health Educator
Orange County Health Department
200 N. Greensboro Street, Suite D-15
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-968-2042
Email: scliffor@co.orange.nc.us

Meaghan Tracy

Triangle Area Manager
Refugee and Immigration Services
LFS Carolinas
112 Cox Ave.
Raleigh, NC 27605
919.861.2807
meaghan.tracy@lfscarolinas.org
<http://www.lfscarolinas.org>

UNC-CH Graduate Student Team:

Becky Cathcart
Caytie Decker
Megan Ellenson
Anna Schurmann
Michael Schwartz
Neha Singh

UNC School of Public Health
Department of Health Behavior Health Education
CB# 7440
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7440
uncstudents@gmail.com

Faculty Advisor:

Eugenia Eng, DrPH
UNC School of Public Health
Department of Health Behavior and Health Education
Campus Box 7440
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7440
(919) 966-3909
eeng@email.unc.edu



Schedule

- **5:00-5:15** Welcome/opening speeches [Auditorium]
- **5:25-6:30** Small group discussions
 - * Adult Education [Cafeteria]
 - * Community Organization [Auditorium-stage]
 - * Health Knowledge [Auditorium]
 - * Interpreter Services [Music Room]
- **6:30-7:15** Dinner [Cafeteria]
- **7:20-7:30** Entertainment [Auditorium]
- **7:30-7:45** Presentation of findings from small group discussions [Auditorium]
- **7:45-7:55** Raffle [Auditorium]
- **7:55-8:00** Closing Remarks [Auditorium]



Background on Burma

Burma is the largest country by geographic area on mainland Southeast Asia. Throughout its history, Burma has been under the rule of numerous Empires. From the late 1800s through 1948, it was held as a British Colony. When Burma gained independence in 1948, it started as a democracy, but there was a military coup d'état in 1962, and the military junta stayed in power for 26 years. The ideology of the ruler, Ne Win, included some socialist ideals, but also included severe isolationism, expulsion of foreigners, discouragement of tourists, closing off of the economy, repression of minorities, and a police state.



A number of large democratic uprisings occurred over that time period, including the famous 8888 uprising, but all were opposed violently by the military. After the 8888 uprising, there was another coup d'état, and State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took over, and is still the ruling party today. In 1990, free elections were held for the first time in almost 30 years. The NLD, the party of Aung San Suu Kyi (winner of the Nobel Peace Prize), won 392 out of a total 489 seats, but the election results were voided by SLORC, which refused to step down. Aung San Suu Kyi is still under house arrest at the order of the military government.



Resources

Additional information on Burma and the community:

Burma:

- <http://rangoon.usembassy.gov/wwwh-burma-a-way-forward.html>
- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/scp/2006/72840.htm>
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6498029.stm>

Karen Ethnic Group:

- www.karen.org
- www.karenemergency.org
- www.khrg.org
- www.freeburmarangers.org

Refugee Health:

- http://www3.baylor.edu/~Charles_Kemp/refugee_health_problems.htm
- www.globalhealth.gov_BurmeseRefugees-HLTHissues.pdf



— Themes Not Discussed at the Forum —

The following themes were identified through the AOCD process but were not prioritized by the Forum Planning Committee. All theme findings will be reported in the final document.

- **Education for Youth:** Due to the lack of tutoring outside of class time, families feel that children have trouble keeping up with their studies.
- **Acculturation:** Traditional parental roles are compromised by children acculturating more quickly than their parents into the American lifestyle.
- **Acculturation:** Adults feel anxious that youth are losing their ethnic identities because they adapt so quickly to American culture.
- **Institutional Literacy:** The high cost and unfamiliarity with health insurance leads to many community members, especially children, not being insured and not seeking health care.
- **Language Barrier:** Family members are used as interpreters for each other in formal and informal settings, even though this sometimes creates uncomfortable situations.
- **Lack of Knowledge of Community:** Service providers want more knowledge about the community and its culture so they can more effectively respond to the community's needs.
- **Domestic Violence:** Though not often talked about directly, domestic violence is present in the community, impacting the well-being of the entire community.
- **Divisions within the community:** There is a lack of unity between ethnic groups, which hinders community cohesion.



— Background on Burma —

The Burmese government recognizes 135 distinct ethnic groups, and a number of them are represented here in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. While there are differences within the community, almost all of the people from Burma living in Chapel Hill or Carrboro share the fact that they were oppressed by the current government, and most had to flee Burma for fear of their lives. Some ended up in Thailand, while others hid in the Burmese jungle. Often they lived illegally, fearing for their safety. Those who were lucky, eventually were granted refugee status and allowed to legally move to the United States.

The first group of refugees from Burma started arriving in this area about 10 years ago. Lutheran Family Services, a refugee processing agency in Raleigh, placed families with co-sponsoring agencies, such as churches, to help the refugees find apartments and jobs while completing mandatory medical examinations. Imagine moving to a new country where you didn't speak the language, understand the culture, or know anyone, with only \$400. Yet the people from Burma not only survived, they thrived.

The community has now grown to more than 250 people, and there are new families arriving every week. They work at UNC; they own their own businesses; they own homes in the community; their children are in schools from Carrboro Elementary School (tonight's site) to UNC. For many of them, after years of oppression, life here is the first true freedom they have known. They can go wherever they want, say anything they want, and not live in fear of being arrested or deported. But that does not mean life is perfect for this group; there are still ways to make the transition smoother and their lives richer. This meeting is about recognizing this important community and their needs in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. It is about bringing this diverse community together. And it is about creating action to better their lives.



The Community Assessment Process

What is an AOCD?

AOCD means Action-Oriented Community Diagnosis. AOCD is a community assessment designed to understand the cultural, social, economic, and health experiences of individuals living in the same community. As a team of six graduate students from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health, we have been conducting a community assessment of the community of people from Burma living in Chapel Hill and Carrboro since October 2006. This process involved collecting secondary data (e.g. reading articles in newspapers, books, websites, etc.), attending community events and meetings, and interviewing community members and service providers. The overarching goal of this project is to learn about the unique history, strengths, and challenges of this community and work toward enhancing services accessed by people from Burma living in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

Why do an AOCD on people from Burma living in Chapel Hill and Carrboro?

The students' community preceptors, Susan Clifford, Senior Public Health Educator at the Orange County Health Department and Meaghan Tracy, Refugee Services Coordinator for Lutheran Family Services, requested a student team from UNC for assistance in speaking to community members and service providers to learn more about the community in order to help service providers better serve it. Ms. Clifford and Ms. Tracy gave the students a tour of the Chapel Hill/Carrboro area, helped introduce the students to community members and service providers, accompanied the students to community events, and provided general guidance throughout the AOCD process.

How did we collect our data?

We conducted over 40 interviews with community members and service providers. We analyzed the interview data, as well



Themes



INTERPRETER SERVICES

ကျိတ်တီကီတီခဲ၊
ဘာသာစကားအခက်အခဲ၊ (ဘာသာစကားအတားအဆီး)

The lack of interpreters for the Burmese and Karen languages in Chapel Hill/Carrboro prevents access to services and reduces their quality.

ခိဖျိလၢပုၤတဲၤကျိးတၢ်လၢပယီၤကျိးဒီးပုၤကညိကျိၢ်လၢခွးဟံၣ်ဟ့ၣ်, ခါဘိၣ်ရိၣ်အံၤစ့ၤအယိၣ်ဒုးကတိၣ်တၢ်တြိဆၢလၢကဒီးန့ၢ်ဘၣ်တၢ်မၤစၢၤဒီးမၤဖ့ၣ်လီၤအဝဲသ့ၣ်အတၢ်အိၣ်မူအပတီၢ်လီၤ.

ချုပါယံၤဟေးလ် ခါးဘိုရိုၣ်တွၢ်နေထိုင်သူများအတွက် မြန်မာဘာသာနှင့်ကရင်ဘာသာစကားပြန်နည်းပါးသော-ကာင့်အကူအညီအထောက်အပံ့ရရှိရန်ခက်ခဲပီးပြည့်မှီသောအရည်အခြင်းကိုရော့နည်းစေသည်။

"The ideal, from our perspective, with my job as a _____, I want to be able to pick up the phone and talk to someone, but it is frustrating to have to wait a couple of days because I want to be responsive to parents as soon as possible."

- service provider



Project Description

ပျားကွဲဖိယုဂျီထိုင်ဖွင့်စီမံခန့်ခွဲအံ့မေးလိတော်လောကမျှော်တော်အိန်ဆူအိန်ချစ် (UNC) အံ့မေးလိသက်တော်ဒီးဟိန်ကဝီခိန်နုလါအမေစာပျားဘက်ကီဘက်ခဲလါကီပယီဟဲအိန်ဖဲခွဲးဟင်ဟ့လ်ခါဘိန်ရိန်တော်ကရါကရီအပူဒီးဝဲကျိသ့တဖန်လီ။ တော်ရိန်တော်ကျိအံ့အတော်ပညိန်မ့ဝဲပကယုထံသ့ညါပျားအိန်ပျားဆိးဖဲအံ့သ့တဖန်အဂု်အကျိအဂံ်အဘါဒီးတော်ကီတော်ခဲလါအဝဲသ့ဘက်ကွါဆာန်မဲဝဲသ့တဖန်ဒီးဒ်သိးအဝဲသ့ဟ်ဖျါထိုင်အတော်ကီတော်ခဲလါဟိန်ကဝီပျားဘက်မူဘက်ဒါသ့တဖန်ကသုအဂီလီ။ ဒ်သိးပကမေးန့တော်ဂု်တော်ကျိသ့တဖန်အဂီ လါအပူကွံင်ယုလါဘျိုင်ဘျိုင်ပဟးယုထာဖိုင်တော်ဂု်တော်ကျိသ့တဖန်, ပထိုင်ဟိန်ကဝီတော်အိန်ဖိုင်ပမေးသက်တော်လါဟိန်ကဝီတော်ဟူးတော်ဂဲဒီးပသံကွါသံဒီးပျားလါအမူအဒါအိန်တဖန်ဒီးပျားလါအအိန်လါဟိန်ကဝီပျားအံ့တဖန်လီ။ တဟါညါအံ့ပကိးဖိုင်ပျားအိန်လါတော်ကရါကရီပူဒီးပျားဘက်မူဘက်ဒါသ့တဖန်လါတော်အိန်ဖိုင်တဘျီအံ့ဒ်သိးပကတော်ပိန်တော်ပိသက်တော်ဂု်တော်ကျိလါပထိုင်သ့ညါဘက်တဖန်ဒီးပကစံညိတ်တော်အရူဒိုင်လါပကမေးအံ့လါခံတပတီလီ။

တော်အံ့ပမု်လါလါကကဲဘျူးကဲဖိုင်လါတော်ကရါကရီအဂီခိဖျိတော်ဒုးအါထိုင်တော်နံပာ်လါပျားဘက်မူဘက်ဒါတဖန်ဒီးပျားအိန်လါတော်ကရါကရီပူတဖန်အဘာ်စာဒီးဒ်သိးမေးစာတော်ဒ်သိးပကအိန်ဒီးတော်နံပာ်လိာ်သးကအါထိုင်ဒီးကဒုးဂုထိုင်တော်မေးစာအဂီလီ။



Themes



COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

တော်ကရါကရီလါပျားအိန်လါဟိန်ကဝီပူ, လူမဲဒုးအသိုင်းအဝိုင်းအဖွဲ့ အစည်း။

A lack of organization hinders the community's ability to help new arrivals, maintain culture, and improve the lives of community members.

ခိဖျိတော်ကရါကရီအတော်ဂံ်စာ်ဘါစာ်အယိဒုးကဲထိုင်တော်ကီတော်ခဲလါတော်ကရါကရီကမေးစာပျားဟဲအသီတော်, တော်ကဟံးယာ်တော်ဆဲးတော်လါဒီးကဲထိုင်တော်ကီတော်ခဲလါကဒုးထီထိုင်တော်အိန်ဆိးအပတီလါတော်ကရါကရီအပူလီ။

ဖွဲ့ စည်းမဲဒုးနည်းမဲဒုးကောင့် ရောက်ရှိလာသည့်လူသစ်များကိုကူညီရန် ကွန်မြူနတီလိုလုပ်နိုင်စွမ်းကိုနေ့စဉ်ရိုးရာ ယဉ်ကျေးမှုပြုထိမ်းသိမ်းမပြုအားနည်းနေခြင်းနှင့်ကွန်မြူနတီတရုလုံး၏လူနေမပြုအဆင့်အတန်းကိုတိုးတက်မပြုနေ့စဉ် ရှေးစေသည်။

"Organizing people is not a political party. We need to hold hands together; it's not like a political party. I really want us to know each other. So many more people are coming in June and July. I am afraid we don't have enough energy to do that."

- community member



Themes



ADULT EDUCATION

သးပှ်တၢ်ကူၣ်ဘၣ်ကူၣ်သ့၊
သက်ကြီးပညာရေး၊

Community members want to attend ESL classes to improve their English, but ESL class scheduling conflicts with work and family life.

ပှ်အိၣ်လၢတၢ်ကရၢကရီပှ်တဖၣ် န်သိးကးဟးထီၣ်တၢ်သ့ကီၢ်လၢဝါကျိၣ်အဂီၢ်, အဝဲသ့ၣ်အိၣ်ဒီးထီၣ်(ESL)တၢ်မၤလိၣ်န့ၣ်သက့စီဖျိလၢတၢ်ထီၣ်ကိၣ်အဆၢကတီၢ်ဒီးတၢ်မၤအဆၢကတီၢ်ဒီးတၢ်ကွၢ်ထွဲန့ၣ်ဖိထၢဖိအဂီၢ်တဘျီလိာ်သးဘၣ်.

ကွၢ်မြူနတီအတွင်းနေထိုင်သောသူများသည် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာတွင်တိုးတက်မရှိအောင်(နူ)ကျောင်း တက်ခြင်းသော်လည်း (နူ)အချိန်ဇယားနှင့်အလုပ်အချိန်နှင့်မိသားစုအတွက်အဆင်ပြေမမြဲရှိပါ။

"Everybody knows they should know how to speak the language, but... everyone has to struggle with their daily lives so they can only go to class at most once a week - they have no time... They need to find the right time and place for everybody. Right now, there is no time. ESL has its own schedule and it does not go together with their work schedule."

-community member



Project Description

လ(ဃ)ပြည်သူ့ ကျေးဇူး ကျောင်းမှ ဘွဲ့ ရှုပီး ကျောင်းသား(၆)ယောက်တို့က ချပါယ်လ်ဟေး၊ ခါးဘိုဂျီ အတွင်းနေထိုင်သောမြန်မာဒုက္ခသည်များ၏ဒေသဆိုင်ရာကွန်မြူနတီ ခေါင်းဆောင်များနှင့် ၎င်း တို့ အားကူညီနေသောအေးဂျင့်များနှင့်အတူတကွပူးပေါင်းလုပ်ဆောင်ခဲ့ပါသည်။ ဤစီမံကိန်း၏ရည်ရွယ်ချက်မှာ၊ ဤဒေသတွင်နေထိုင်-
သူများ၏ရာဇဝင်သမိုင်းနှင့်အားသာချက်များ ၊ သူတို့ ရင်ဆိုင်တွေ့ ရှိရ သော- ပြဿနာအခက်အခဲများ နှင့်ဒေသဆိုင်ရာ ဌာနများမှ တာဝန်ရှိသူများအား သူတို့ လိုအပ်သော အရာများမှတာဝန်ရှိသူများအားသူတို့ လိုအပ်-
သောအရာများကိုတင်ပြနိုင်ရေးကိုလေ့လာသင်ယူရန်ဖြစ် ပါသည်။ ဒီသတင်းအချက်အလက်များရရှိရန်အတွက်လွန်ခဲ့သည်၊ ခြောက်လကျော်ကျော်လောက် တွင်၊ ဤ(၆) လပါဝင်သော- အသင်းသည်ရရှိနိုင်သောစရင်းစရားအချက်အလက်များကိုစုဆောင်းခဲ့ကာ ဒေသဆိုင်ရာအစည်းအဝေးများနှင့်လပြီရားမမြားတွင်ပါဝင်ဆင်နွှဲကာ ဝန်ထမ်းနှင့်ကွန်မြူနတီ အတွင်း နေထိုင်သောသူများအားလူတွေ့ မေးမြန်းမမြားပြုလုပ်ခဲ့ပါသည်။ ဒီညသည် ကွန်မြူနတီ မှ ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်များ နှင့်- ဝန်ထမ်းများအားအတူတကွခေါ်ဆောင်ကာတွေ့ ရှိသောအချက်အလက်များကိုဆွေးနွေးပီး ရှေ့ ဆက်ဦးစားပေးလုပ်ဆောင်ပါသည်။ ဤလုပ်ဆောင်မပြုမီ ဝန်ထမ်းများနှင့်ကွန်မြူနတီအတွင်းနေထိုင် သူများအ- ကားနားလည်သဘောပေါက်မမြားလားခြင်းအားဖြင့်အကြီးအမြတ်ပေါ်ပေါက်လာရန် မျှော် လင့်ပီး တဦးနှင့်တဦးအားလည်မပြုရှိလာရန်အထောက်အကူဖြစ်စေပီး ဝန်- ဆောင်မပြုလည်းပိုမိုမြင့် တင်နိုင်မည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။



Strengths of the Community

- Most community members feel that everyone helps each other.
"People who live here, they take care of each other."
- community member
- Adults are considered by employers as very hard workers.
"Hard working folks who are often working two jobs, who have great determination to do well and succeed."
- service provider
- Children are very interested in learning.
"My son is very honest. He always wants to learn a lot and gets excited to ask more questions."
- community member
- The community greatly values education.
"One of the reasons I came here is for my children's education. I couldn't stay there anymore. My children's education is one of my priorities . . . I believe that all parents want their children to go to school."
- community member
- Spiritual life is significant to the community.
"[Religion] is very important to everybody, no matter if Christian or Buddhist, in my community."
- community member
- The family unit is highly regarded in the community.
"They want their children to do as much as they can. You can tell they really value their family and kids. They definitely want them to go to college because that is what you need to get ahead here."
- service provider
- Strength and perseverance
"Perseverance - they are very determined and self reliant."
- service provider



Strengths of the Area

- Freedom from religious, ethnic, and political persecution.
"We have freedom here. In our own country, there is no freedom. We cannot go where we want to go or do what we want to do. But, when we arrived here, we are given a chance to work; we can go anywhere." - community member
- Carrboro and Chapel Hill are safe communities.
"In Thailand you have to worry; you have to be afraid the whole time. You are afraid of being arrested by the police there. In the U.S., this is not a concern."
- community member
- Chapel Hill and Carrboro are welcoming communities.
"In this area, people accept almost anyone here. [You] especially wouldn't find this in a bigger city." - service provider
- There is high quality health care in the area.
"After my arrival here I was very happy, especially for my health. When I was in Thailand I was sick. I was sick for a long time. I had a hard time getting medicine. Since I have been here, I have been able to get good medicines. I feel much better. I have seen good doctors."
- community member
- The school system is one of the best in the state.
"It's a very good place. Very good community here. After I arrive here, my sponsor used to tell me not to move anywhere because the schools are very good here. Let the children go to school in Chapel Hill. They told me like that." - community member
- Ample job opportunities.
"We are very lucky to be here because it is not too hard to find jobs like some states. People move here for jobs sake. It is good for Burmese and Karen people to settle down here."
- community member
- Temperate climate
"It is warm. The weather is good. It is not that cold in winter. When we lived in New York City, the snow would come up to our knees." - community member
- Free public transportation
"This area is very good for us. Transportation because the bus is free to go everywhere. We can go to work by bus, we can go shopping by bus. Everything is easy by transportation." - community member