



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Sonoran Center for
Excellence in Disabilities

Elevating Refugee Perspectives about Access to Disability Services in Arizona

Julie Armin PhD; Jacy Farkas MA, ABD

Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities

PRESENTATION AGENDA

- Introduction & Overview
- Timeline & Activities
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Q&A



University Team



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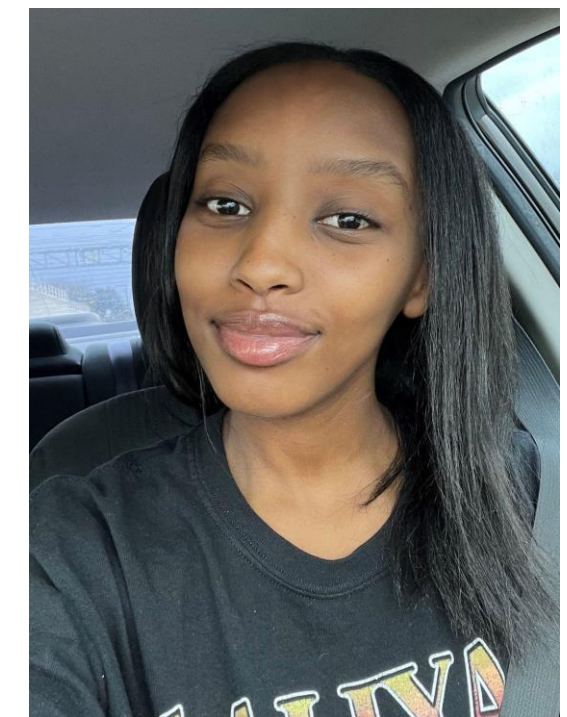
Alexis Gradillas



Sommer Abdulaimi, MD & Suzanne Teeple, JD



Marija Shahid, BS



Joyeuse Mujambere





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Overview of Project Goals

Understand access to and use of disability services for the diverse communities of refugees with disabilities



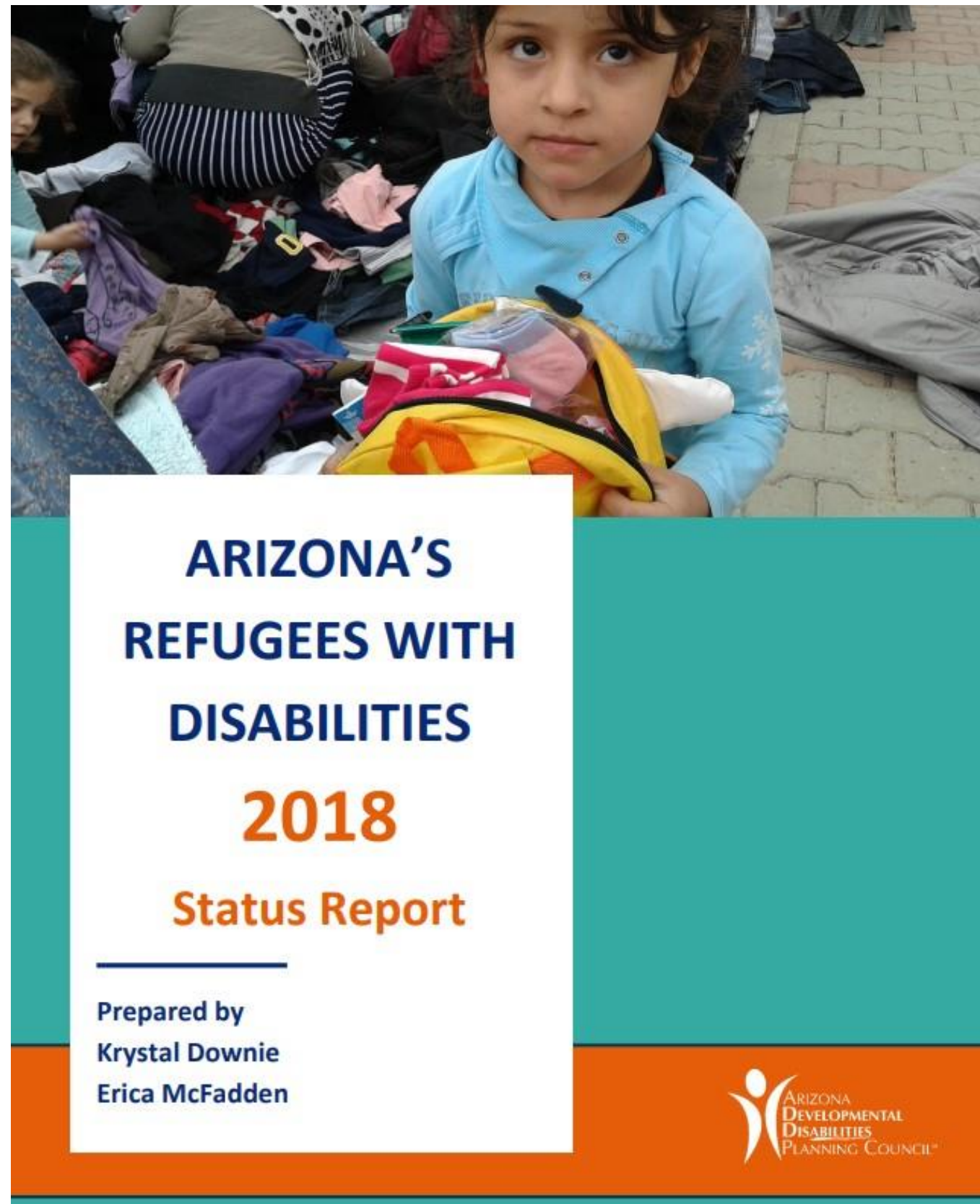
Describe **best practices to reduce gaps and increase access** to disability services for refugees with disabilities

Difficulty navigating disability service systems

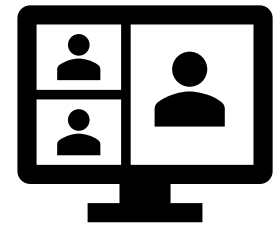
Language and interpretation

Disability-related stigma

Employment challenges



Project Timeline: October 2022 – December 2023



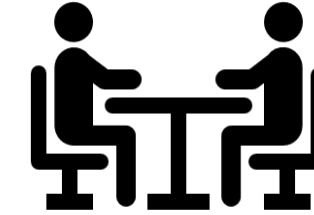
CAB

- 5 meetings
- Planning & input
- Data collection
- Data interpretation
- Recommendations



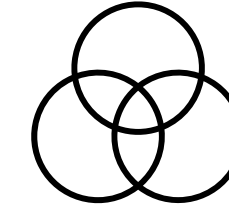
Group Concept Mapping

- Data collection
- CAB (n=9)
 - Online from professionals & caregivers (n=16)
 - In-person with refugees (n=13)



In-depth Interviews

- Person with disability and supporter (N=9)
- 3 dyads
 - 1 triad
 - 3 Tucson | 1 Phoenix



Data Analyses

- Triangulation:
- GCM
 - Interviews
 - Policy Scan

Community Engagement

CAB – Community Partners – Recruitment – Technical Assistance – Information Dissemination

Review AZ legislative and agency policies

Review of practices from 50 states and territories

Survey of refugee health coordinators (N=3)



Final Report

Recommendations for practice & policy



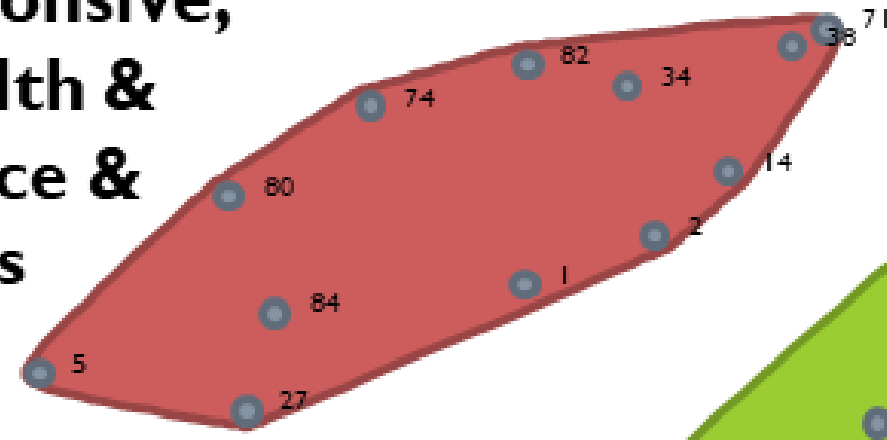
“I don’t know why they don’t help us, whether it is race, religion, non-English speaker, refugee, are my assumptions of why we’re ignored. They ignore us [refugees], and this increases our sickness.”

*GCM
Brainstorming
participant
May 4, 2023*

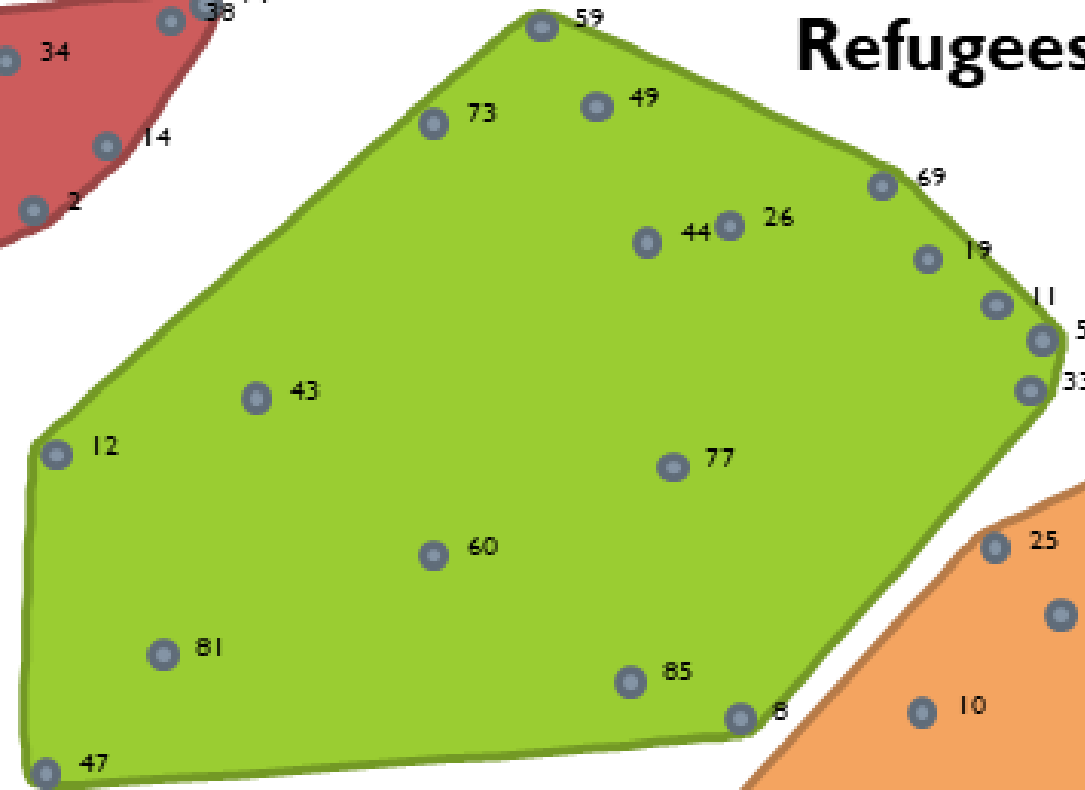


Cluster Map

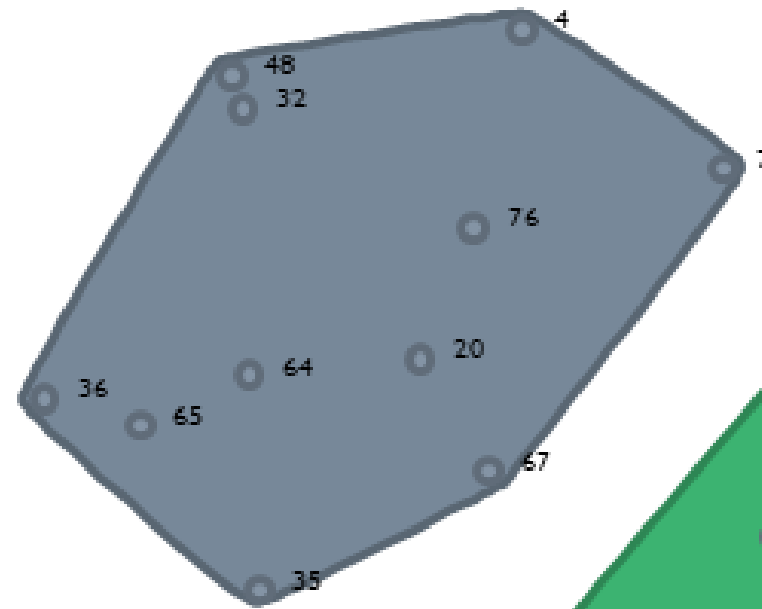
**Culturally Responsive,
Accessible Health &
Disability Service &
Benefit Systems**



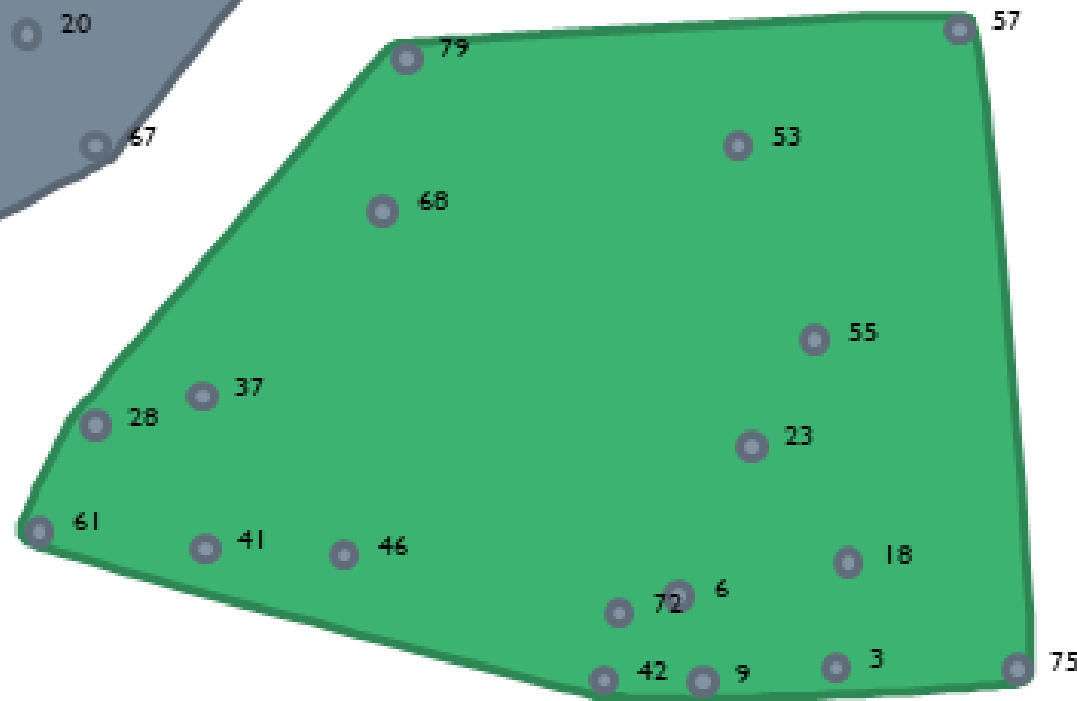
**Agency Training &
Coordination about
Refugees & Disability**



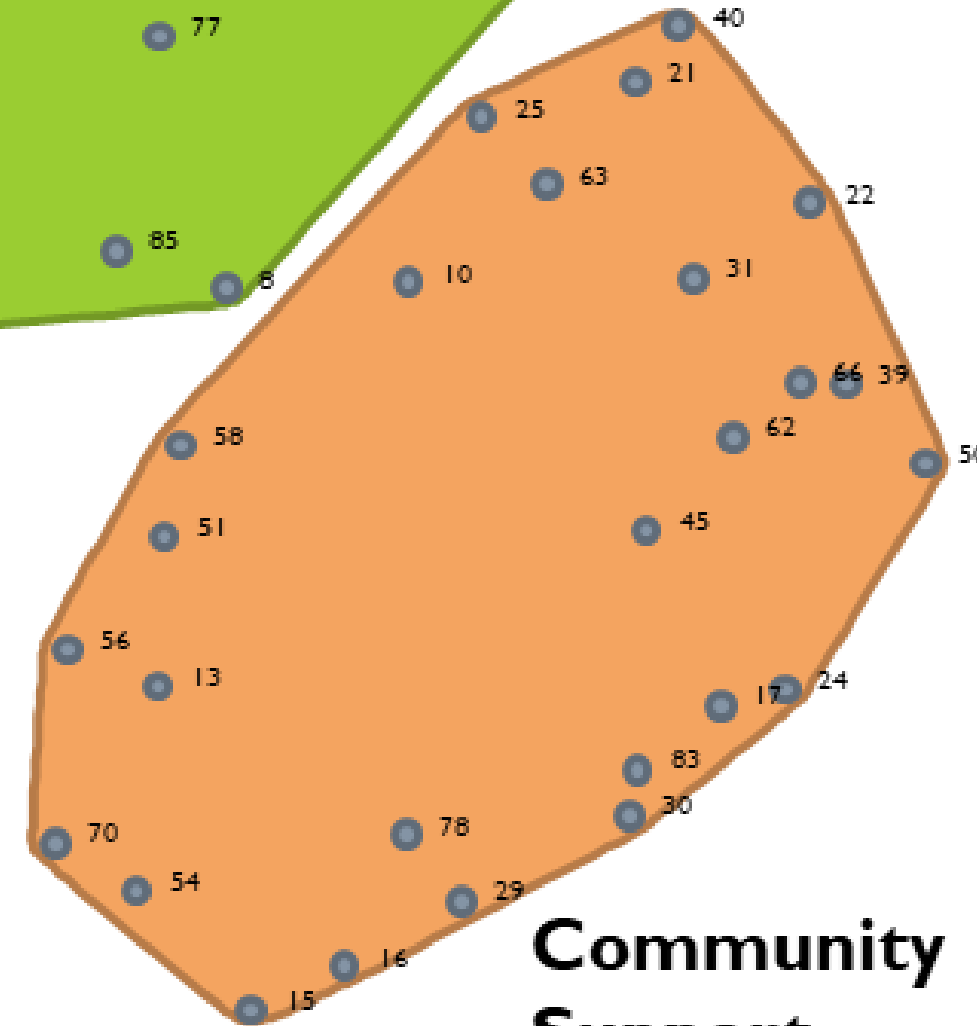
**Language &
Resource Access**



Refugee Rights & Self-Advocacy Education

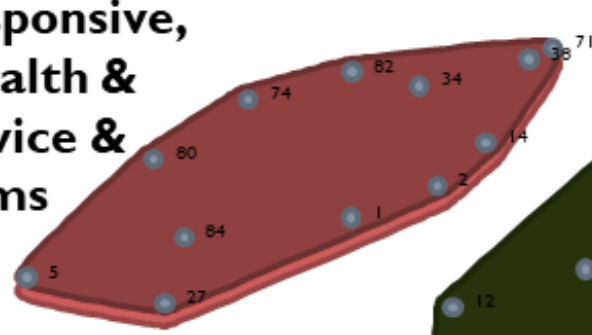


**Community
Support,
Representation &
Mentorship**

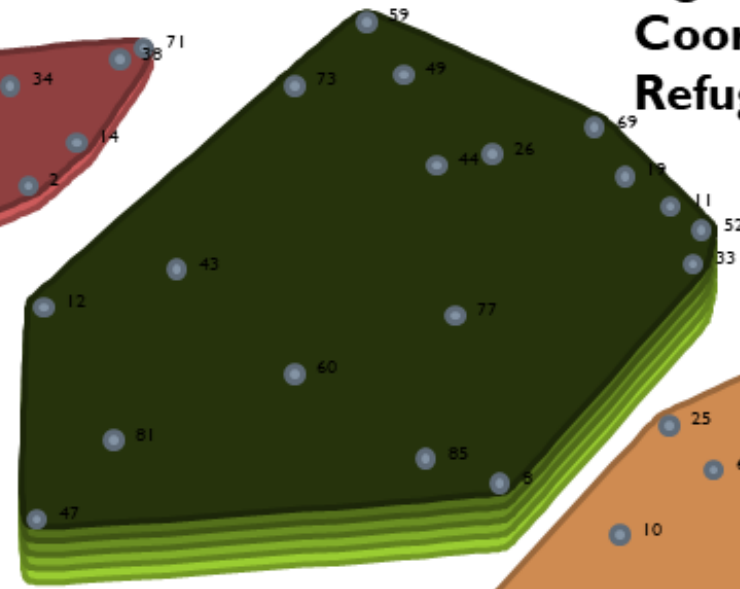


Importance Cluster Map

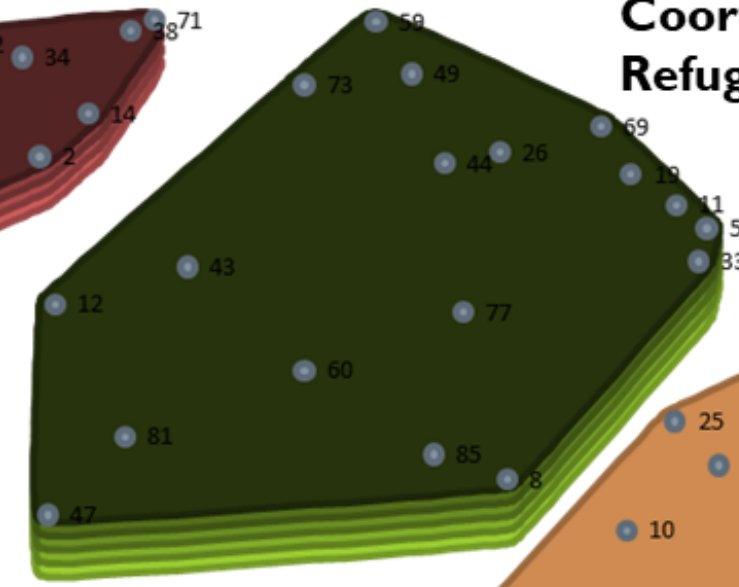
Culturally Responsive, Accessible Health & Disability Service & Benefit Systems



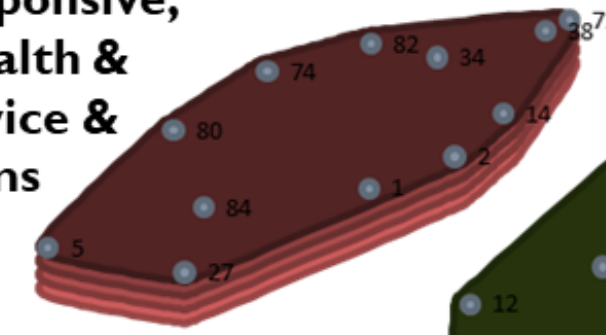
Agency Training & Coordination about Refugees & Disability



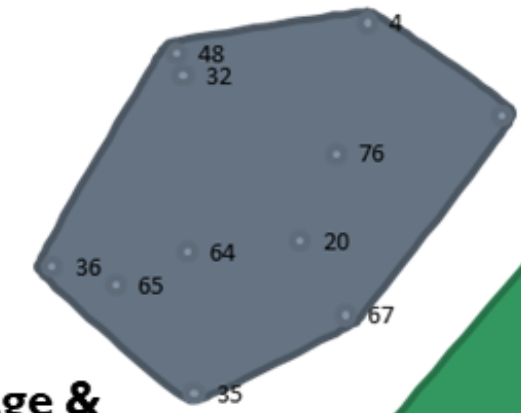
Agency Training & Coordination about Refugees & Disability



Culturally Responsive, Accessible Health & Disability Service & Benefit Systems



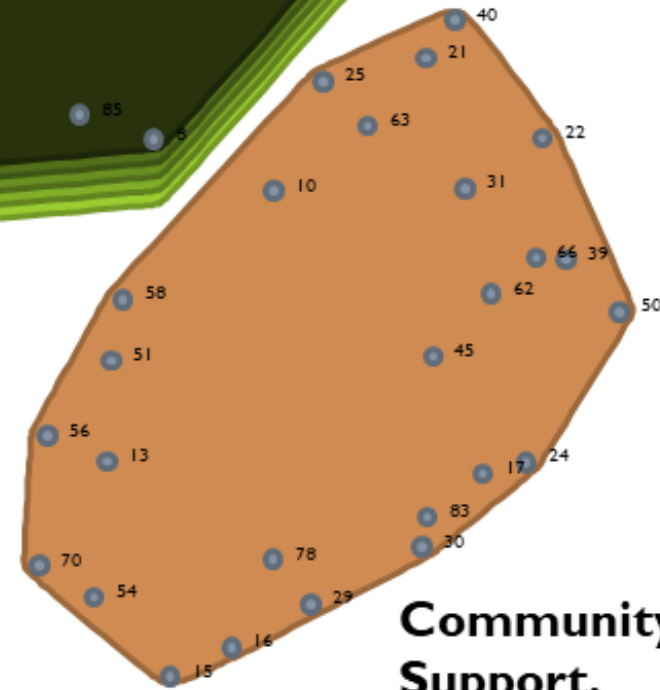
Language & Resource Access



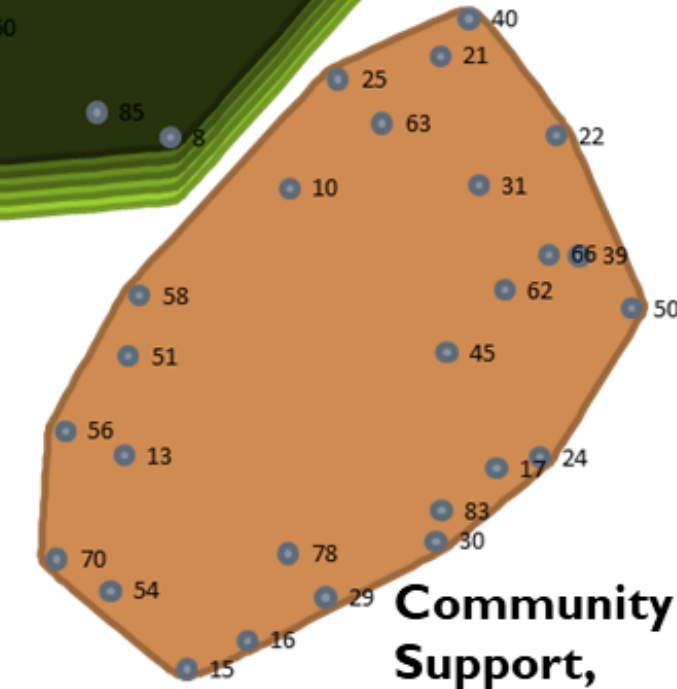
Language & Resource Access



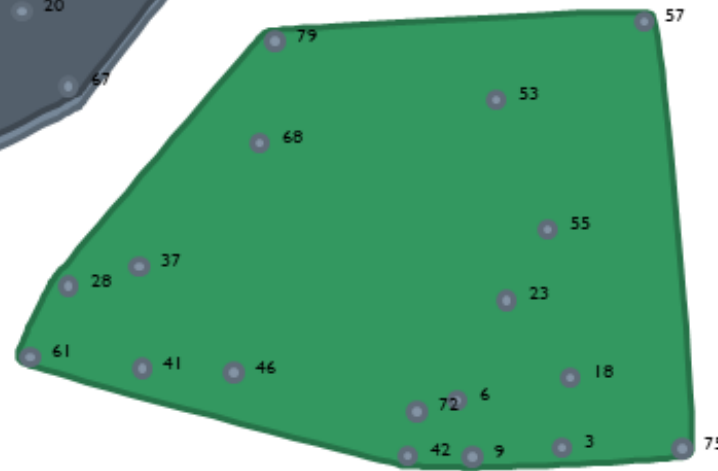
Community Support, Representation & Mentorship



Community Support, Representation & Mentorship



Refugee Rights & Self-Advocacy Education



Refugee Rights & Self-Advocacy Education



Scale

- 1 = Not so important
- 2 = Somewhat important
- 3 = Important
- 4 = Very important

Scale

- 1 = None of the time
- 2 = Some of the time
- 3 = Most of the time
- 4 = All of the time



Very Important, but Not Currently Happening

“Culturally responsive, accessible health & disability services and benefit systems” *(selected)*

**Getting
timely
diagnosis**

**Having Case
Managers for
public health
plans that
specialize in
refugee care**

**Interpretation
available**

Very Important, but Not Currently Happening

“Agency Training & Coordination about Refugees & Disability” *(selected)*

**PCP
education
about
disabilities**

**Enforcing the
right to an
interpreter or
translated
materials**

**Training for law
enforcement
and border
patrol**

Very Important, but Not Currently Happening

“Community Support, Representation & Mentorship”

(selected)

**Caregivers &
providers from
refugee
communities**

**Member from
refugee
community to
guide them with
resources and
what is available
to them**

**Refugee
crisis center**

Very Important, but Not Currently Happening “Refugee Rights & Self-Advocacy Education” *(selected)*

**Parent group
to share
information**

**Peer mentorship
from refugees
with success in
navigating
disability
systems**

**Refugee role
models with
a disability**

Very Important, but Not Currently Happening

“Language & Resource Access” *(selected)*

**Training for
refugees on
disability in
U.S.**

**Culturally and
linguistically
appropriate
diagnostic
assessment for
disabilities**

**Education
services in
their
language**

In-depth interviews



Expanding possibilities and enhancing independence through education, research and service

Lack of knowledge of individual rights/opportunities for people with disabilities

- Family members require information about individual rights and opportunities (e.g., students with disabilities may stay in school until age 22 with goals/units to complete)
- Unable to get the support needed to pursue education/employment

Lack of Interpretation

- Interpreters are not provided, or they are provided in incorrect language or dialect.
- Interpretation may not be made available to supporters of adults with disabilities.
- Without effective interpretation it is not possible for staff to meaningfully engage with the person with a disability and their supporters.

Family Disengagement Caused by Service System Issues

- Person with a disability is not included in the meeting
- Family is presented with a list and told the goals for their child, although they do not feel they are realistic
- Length of time to get services creates additional barriers

Importance of the Community/Collective

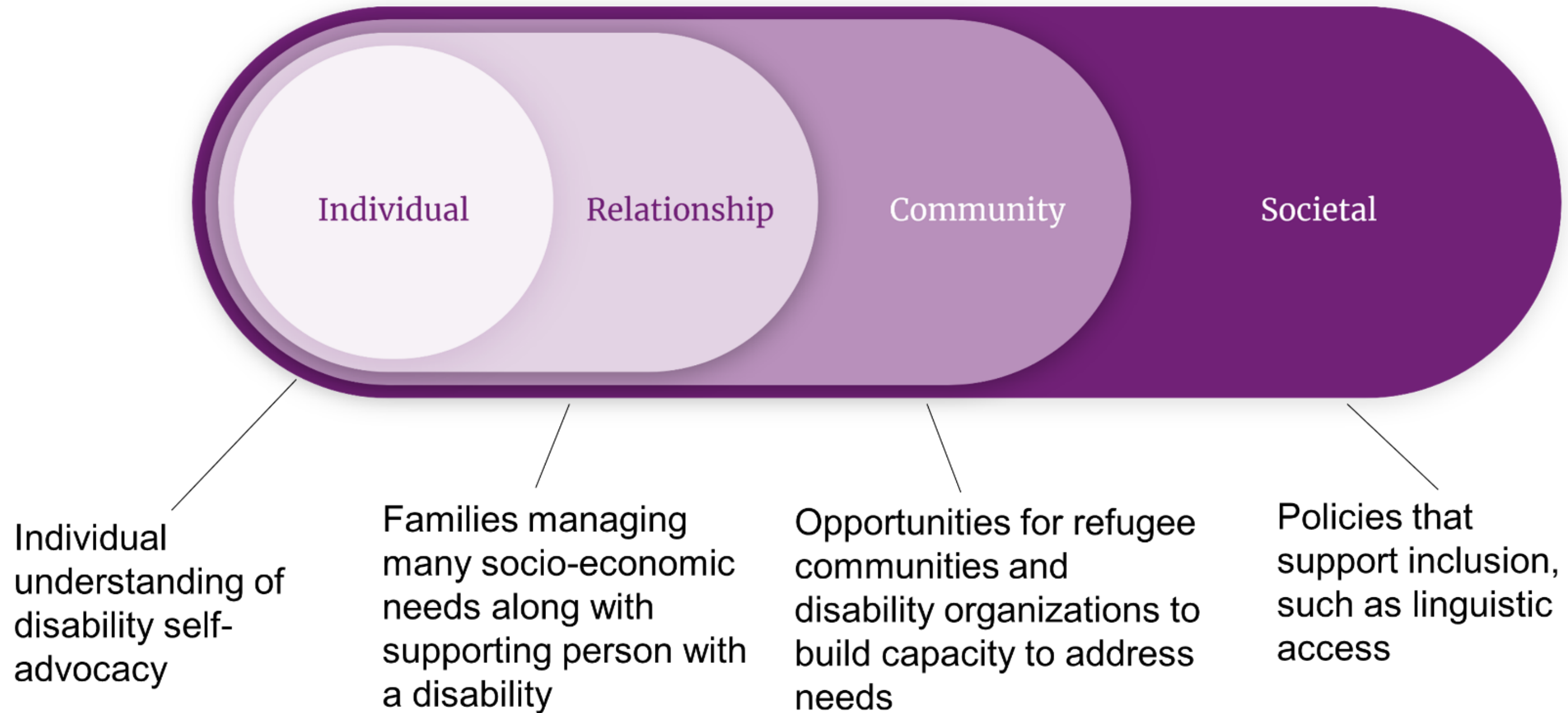
- For children under 18, families reported a significant burden because parents are unable to serve as caregivers for reimbursement under AHCCCS
- It may be important to the family to provide care, instead of a direct support professional – they know the person best.
- Clients may prioritize the well-being of their families and/or communities, rather than the individual

Findings



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Expanding possibilities and enhancing independence through education, research and service



Recommendations



Recommendations to Improve Service Quality

Ensure language access

- adequate funding and oversight to ensure adherence to language policies
- consider innovative approaches such as a stand-alone language line that provides anytime interpretation

Establish reliable transportation

- timely, universally accessible, and linguistically responsive



Recommendations to Improve Service Quality

Make available timely and linguistically appropriate diagnosis and assessment

Bolster primary and secondary educational institutions' ability **to engage with refugee families**

- address families' basic needs
- facilitate appropriate assessment and support for learners



Programmatic Recommendations

Identify and educate “gatekeepers” for refugee communities about disability services

- PCPs, Interpreters

Provide education to refugee families about the expectations for self-advocacy in the U.S.

- individual rights within the disability service systems
- Implement **peer support programs** for refugees with disabilities and their families

Programmatic Recommendations

- Train **disability-focused refugee case managers**, who have knowledge of the specialized disability systems
- **Implement a “DD Navigator”** to provide sustained advocacy



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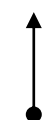
Focused Recommendations

Disparities: A Disability Framework⁵

**FULL PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL AND OTHER DISABILITIES
in all facets of community life**



Health ♦ Housing ♦ Child Care ♦ Recreation ♦ Employment ♦ Education ♦ Early Intervention ♦ Transportation



**Public Policy & Resources
(Public & Private Sector)**

Focused Recommendations

- System-level intervention
 - State agencies should conduct ongoing evaluation of programming
 - Consider utilizing disability service systems' quality improvement initiatives to assess collection of data points, such as:
 - language use
 - refugee status
 - use of interpreters
 - use of transportation services
 - ADDPC serve as a hub for broad service system data collection and accountability related to refugees with disabilities

Focused Recommendations

- Statewide/Local-level interventions
 - Assess transportation needs by surveying refugees or refugee resettlement agency staff
 - Build workforce capacity:
 - Implement DD navigator(s)
 - Build disability knowledge among CHWs with programs that train refugees
 - Engage communities
 - Disability-focused events with refugee communities in Phoenix and Tucson





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Questions?

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<https://www.walkwithamal.org/events/>



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FULL REPORT
APPENDIX
PLAIN
LANGUAGE
SUMMARY



bit.ly/refugeeperspectives