

Methodology

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The results of preliminary data collection efforts in Santa Clara County showed that the needs of immigrants were highly complex and could not be adequately assessed via a single research methodology (see Background). Therefore, it was decided that a comprehensive evaluation of immigrants' needs would need to employ a multi-pronged approach by combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies (see attached Summary).

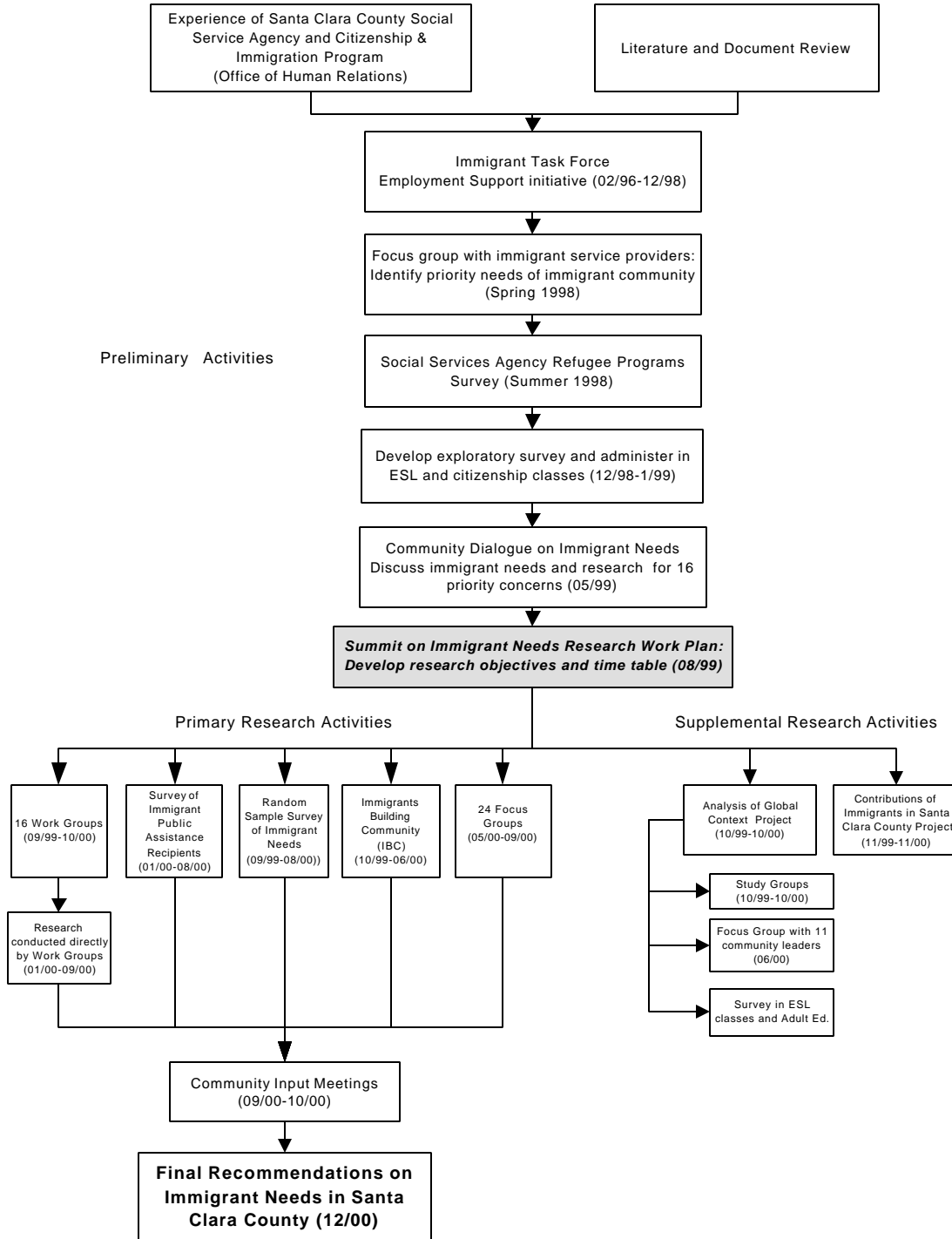
Quantitative research focuses on collecting standardized information from a large, representative sample of the immigrant population. Qualitative research complements and contextualizes the quantitative data by providing more detailed and in-depth information from a select group of immigrants.

In August 1999, a comprehensive research plan was completed, under the direction of JTR and Associates, to guide all data collection activities for the Project. The plan laid out the costs, labor needs, and data collection methodology, including survey development and administration. A Research Advisory Council of local experts and university professors was established to oversee the research effort (see Acknowledgements).

Findings will be presented from the following major research activities and projects:

1. Random Sample Surveys from the top five immigrant nationalities in the county (Mexico, Vietnam, People's Republic of China, the Philippines and India).
2. Surveys of the 16 top immigrant nationalities receiving any public assistance in Santa Clara county, encompassing 98% of all immigrants on aid.
3. Specific Work Groups research projects from the 16 priority areas of concern to immigrants.
4. Focus groups conducted with immigrants from these dominant immigrant nationalities in the country.
5. Immigrants Building Community (IBC), a platform for participatory action research involving immigrants from Bosnia, Iran, Somalia, Mexico and Vietnam.
6. Contributions of Immigrants Research Project.
7. Global Context Research Project.

Summit on Immigrant Needs Summary of Research Activities



QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

This section will focus on the methods used for survey development and administration with respect to the random sample of immigrants and public assistance recipients.

The survey, called the Human Needs Questionnaire, focused on 16 priority immigrant needs areas identified during the preliminary research phase (see Table 1). In the following section, we will discuss how the survey was developed, the methods used for survey administration and data collection.

Table 1: 16 Priority Need Areas for Immigrants in Santa Clara County

Citizenship	Community Education
Criminal Justice	Dependent Care (Child, Disabled, Elderly)
Domestic Violence	Employment Training
English as a Second Language (ESL)	Food
Housing	Immigration Legal Services
Income Maintenance	K-12 Education
Mental Health	Health Care Access
Small Business	Wages and Working Conditions

Survey Development

The Summit on Immigrant Needs Project developed the Human Needs Questionnaire to survey approximately 20,000 immigrants during the Spring of 2000 in order to identify their needs in 16 basic areas. The survey consisted of 113 questions and took 30 to 60 minutes to complete. The survey evolved from the recommendations of the 16 work groups. The Project staff, Research Advisory Council, and volunteers also participated in the construction and revision of the questionnaire. With assistance from the Social Services Agency, the questionnaire was translated into the following 14 languages: Amharic, Bosnian, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Laotian, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

In October and November 1999, the work groups used their expertise in their field to develop questions based on identified issues for the Human Needs Questionnaire. The survey was pilot tested in January 2000 on immigrants attending ESL classes held at West Valley College, Santa Clara Adult Education, San Jose City College, and the Asian Americans for Community Involvement Senior Citizens Program. Feedback during the pilot testing was used to modify the survey.

Survey Administration

In order to get information on immigrant needs, the Human Needs Questionnaire was applied to a random sample of immigrants from the five countries in Santa Clara County with the largest number of immigrants. The survey was also sent to public

assistance recipients through the Social Services Agency. The survey administration methods in each case will be discussed below.

A. Random Sample Survey

The aim was to get as objective data as possible about immigrants from all educational and economic levels in Santa Clara County. Recognizing the limits of random sampling every immigrant nationality in the county, the Summit on Immigrant Needs and the Human Relations Commission chose to survey the five largest immigrant populations in the county, plus a county-wide control group of U.S. born citizens. Based on the 1990 Census and projections, immigrants whose country of birth were Mexico, Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines and India were chosen. The aim was to obtain 250 completed surveys from Mexico, Vietnam, the PRC, Philippines and India, and 400 from the general county population, including 250 U.S. born. The aim was to receive 1650 completed surveys.

The project contracted with American Data Management, a research company that maintains a data base of ethnic surnames. For this project, the company was asked to provide the project with a random selection of Vietnamese, Spanish, Chinese, Filipino, and U.S surnames. The random samples were derived from the telephone directory. These surnames were cross referenced with the Santa Clara County telephone directory to produce phone lists of residents with various ethnic backgrounds. Indian surnames were compiled by the Indo American Community Services Agency and the Northside Center from telephone directories. These names were then turned over to American Data Management for random selection.

The Use of Phone Banking

After determining the randomized samples of immigrants from Mexico, Vietnam, Philippines, China, India, and a general public group (all residents of Santa Clara County), potential respondents to the Human Needs Questionnaire were reached through phone banking. The calls were aimed at informing these immigrants about the survey purposes and content, and encouraging their participation through agreeing to receive, fill out and return the survey with their input.

The month of February 2000 was devoted to the design and pilot testing of the whole system of phone banking, including recruitment, orientation and coordination of phone interviewers, locations for calling, schedules, data gathering formats, mailing, and recording and filing returned surveys. The systematic implementation of phone banking started in the second week of March 2000. The whole process was a joint effort of the Project staff with the collaboration and dedication of interns and volunteers from the National Council of Aging (NCOA), universities and community colleges, and other community members. Most of the interns were students from local schools and universities including San Jose State University, Santa Clara University, Evergreen College and San Jose City College. Most of the telephone interviewers were bilingual, or even trilingual, and were able to talk to the persons they were calling in their native languages (Vietnamese, Spanish, Mandarin, Tagalog, Hindi, or Punjabi).

Phone interviewers explained to the potential respondents the aim of the survey, the difference between the survey and the census, and provided assurances of confidentiality.

There was a systematic monitoring and evaluation of the phone banking system. There was an ongoing process of recruitment and orientation of volunteers, daily recording of results, and weekly analysis to improve the factors influencing return rates from the various target groups.

Once agreements were secured with respondents reached through phone banking, a confidential survey was mailed to them in a enclosed prepaid envelope. Respondents also had the choice to fill out the forms over the phone, but no one used this option.

Telephone callers aimed to make at least five attempts to reach the same person at different times during the day and week to assure randomness. Most of the calls took place between 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and on Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Sundays 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. From 200 to 1,000 calls were made each week. The calling schedules were adjusted after it was determined that some times were better for contacting certain groups of immigrants. The immigrants were called in their native languages, while the general population control group was called in English. In about April 2000, it became apparent that completing 400 calls to the general population would be prohibitively difficult and time consuming. Therefore, it was decided to limit the control group to only the U.S. born.

Administration of the random sample survey was completed by June 30, 2000. A total of 1,092 surveys were completed and returned from the countries below (see Table 2). These returned surveys constituted 22 per cent of the approximate 4,997 questionnaires mailed to people who agreed to participate in the random sample survey.

Table 2: Country of Origin of Random Sample Survey Respondents

Country of origin	Number of Respondents
Mexico	116
Philippines	103
People's Republic of China	70
Vietnam	256
India	272
U.S. born	275
Total	1,092

B. Public Assistance Recipients Survey

To gain a better understanding of Santa Clara County's neediest immigrants, the Social Services Agency mailed the Human Needs Questionnaire to the 16 immigrant nationalities with the highest number of members receiving any public benefit, plus

U.S. born. These included recipients of programs such as CalWORKS cash aid, MediCal only, Food Stamps only, Foster Care cash aid, General Assistance, and Refugee Cash Assistance. In order of the largest number of recipients the countries of origin were: the United States, Mexico, Vietnam, Philippines, China, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran, India, Cambodia, Taiwan, Russia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, South Korea, Nicaragua, Somalia, and Laos. A total of 18,077 questionnaires were mailed with the assistance of the Social Services Agency. Each recipient received two versions of the survey: one in English and the other in their native language. Ethnic Chinese from Vietnam and Vietnamese-speaking Chinese received the survey in three languages, i.e., Chinese, Vietnamese, and English.

Among public assistance recipients, samples were taken only of the U.S. born and largest two nationalities (Mexican and Vietnamese), as these groups were substantially over-represented. Four thousand public aid recipients from each of these groups were randomly drawn from this number. The random sample was based on using the last characters of the case serial number. This is a six character field that is issued sequentially based on the time the client applied for welfare. This process is random and not related to time as only the last characters of the serial number were used. The Human Needs Questionnaire was sent to all other recipients in the remaining top 14 immigrant nationalities. Table 3 gives a breakdown of the number of respondents for each immigrant group.

Table 3: Country of Origin of Human Needs Questionnaire Respondents

Country of origin	Number of Respondents
Mexico	204
Vietnam	215
Philippines	176
China	225
India	48
USA	208
Bosnia	60
Iran	69
Cambodia	34
Taiwan	25
Russia	69
El Salvador	14
Ethiopia	18
Korea	24
Nicaragua	9
Somalia	21
Laos	5
Other	22
Total	1,446

C. Survey Error

Survey error is a combination of three factors: coverage, response rate, and sampling error. Coverage refers to the extent to which the sampling frame used for the survey accurately corresponds to the intended population. For example, the random sample of five immigrant groups ideally represents all immigrants in Santa Clara County who were born in the five respective countries. Using surnames as the method of identification excludes those who fit the definition of the universe, but do not have identifiable ethnic names. In addition, restricting the sampling frame to those with telephones excludes those in the universe who do not have listed residential telephone service. Finally coverage error could be introduced by those who are called on the telephone and are incorrectly screened out because they misidentify themselves to the screening caller. The extent of error from coverage issues such as these is unknown.

Response rate refers to the percentage of identified potential respondents who do not complete the survey. Identified respondents were not interviewed at the time of screening, but were sent questionnaires to be filled in and mailed back. Multiple contacts to encourage returns were made, as described elsewhere. In the end, 1,143 questionnaires were returned from the approximate 4,997 questionnaires mailed out to identified respondents (for the five immigrant groups and the control sample combined). This yields a response rate of 23%. The differences in characteristics between the 23% who responded and the 77% who did not are unknown in terms of direction and size.

Finally, sampling error refers to the error introduced by using statistics based on a sample of the population rather than upon the entire population of interest. Sampling error is largely governed by the size of the sample (the larger the sample, the smaller the error), and the value of the statistic being reported (for example, percentages near the mid-range have greater error than those near the extremes). Sampling error is readily measurable, in contrast to the other two sources of error, which are unknown in this survey. Sampling error can also be increased by departures from simple random sampling. However, given the method of sampling from a known list used in this study, simple random sampling can be used as a good approximation to the sampling design.

A table of sampling errors has been provided in an appendix at the end of this methodology section that permits the user to calculate approximate 95% confidence intervals for proportions applicable to various subgroups in the study. The confidence interval may be interpreted in the following way: If multiple samples of the same size were repeatedly drawn from this population, the sample proportions (having the characteristic for which the confidence interval is being calculated) of 95% of these samples would fall within the specified confidence interval. Instructions on how to use the table and an example are provided with the table.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

From the outset, the Summit on Immigrant Needs Project was committed to developing a comprehensive research methodology which would gather data representative of the broadly diverse immigrant community in Santa Clara County. In particular, the project sought to provide opportunities for immigrants to express their needs in their own words and to propose solutions to the identified problems. As stated by one Summit staff member, “You need to listen to (immigrant’s) own words and experiences to find out about the complexity of the phenomenon and see how it’s possible to change...”

Qualitative research methods were selected which would best meet this goal of allowing immigrants to speak for themselves. The Project employed the following range of methods:

1. Work groups
2. Focus groups
3. Immigrants Building Community (IBC) Process
4. Contribution of Immigrants Research Project
5. The Global Context Research Project

The following sections will describe how each activity was planned and implemented.

1. Work Groups

Sixteen priority need areas were identified during the preliminary research phase.

Citizenship	Community Education	Criminal Justice
Dependent Care	Domestic Violence	Employment Training
English as Second Language (ESL)	Food	Housing
Immigration Legal Services	Income Maintenance	K-12 Education
Mental Health	Health Care Access	Small Business
Wages/Working Conditions		

The sixteen work groups were initially composed of service providers and community people who had worked with immigrants, as well as immigrant residents of the community. These groups began meeting in September 1999 and met on a regular basis through October 2000 to discuss the focus issue of each group and its impact on immigrants, e.g., the food work group met to discuss access to food programs in the county as well as other issues surrounding this topic.

The work groups were the primary vehicle for identifying research questions to be addressed through the quantitative and qualitative data collection. For example, the work groups provided guidance to identify research questions for all aspects of the project, e.g., the random sample survey, the Human Needs Questionnaire, focus groups, and IBC. The work groups participated in identifying service gaps for immigrants and asset mapping for each focus area.

In an effort to expand participation in the work group process, a series of Community Input Meetings were convened. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit community input, review the research findings, and contribute to formulating the final recommendations. A broad outreach and publicity campaign was conducted. Forty meetings were held between September and October 2000.

Work groups also conducted their own independent research projects. These included a combination of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups carried out by the Criminal Justice, K-12 Education, Housing, Mental Health, and Health Care Access work groups.

The Criminal Justice Survey was a hybrid research method of both a random sample survey of sentenced immigrant inmates inside the County Jail System and open-ended inquiries into concerns of the inmates' choosing. Of all the sentenced foreign-born inmates as of May 10, 2000, a total of 223 had release dates after June 2000. One-half or 111 of the 223 were randomly selected and were invited to participate in the survey. The invitation letters sent by the Human Relations Commission of Santa Clara County stressed the voluntary and confidential nature of the research and included a signed agreement statement, asking the language of preference of the inmate. A total of 44 inmates accepted the invitation and were interviewed by trained bilingual volunteers from the Public Defenders Office who spoke Vietnamese, Spanish, and Tagalog. The 55-question survey developed by the Criminal Justice Work Group was translated into the same three languages. The survey was administered on June 20 and 22, 2000 at the Elmwood Correctional Facility in Milpitas. An English version of the questionnaire is located in the Appendix.

The research of the K-12 Education, Housing, Mental Health, and Health Care Access work groups focused on identifying and analyzing best practices and service gaps for their respective areas. The K-12 Education work group conducted a series of focus group. These included separate groups for Vietnamese parents and other immigrant parents, Latino parents, high school-aged Latino youth, high-school-aged Vietnamese youth, and school administrators and staff. The focus groups addressed the issues of barriers faced by immigrant youth and children in education and what can be done to improve the education that immigrant youth and children receive. The Housing work group conducted surveys both with the general public and with clients and staff from various social service agencies. The surveys were translated into Bosnian, Farsi, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The Mental Health and Health Care Access work groups conducted a survey of service providers. The surveys asked providers to describe the services offered by their agencies, the language and cultural competency of these services, other services available in the County, service gaps, access issues, and knowledge of best practices. The Mental Health work group also conducted a survey with clients of mental health service agencies. The surveys were translated into Spanish. Clients were asked about their experiences in accessing and using mental health services, service effectiveness, and satisfaction.

2. Focus Groups

Focus groups were included as a data collection method with the goal of providing an open-ended structure in which immigrant community members could speak for themselves, discuss their basic concerns, and describe the needs they see in their communities. The Project staff developed a plan which outlined the purpose, structure, and goals for the focus groups. In addition, a consultant, María Alaniz, of SJSU, was retained to help prepare the Project staff in how to plan and run focus groups, train facilitators, and report findings. Edward Mammary, Professor of Health Science at SJSU, also provided valuable suggestions as a volunteer consultant.

The Project successfully conducted 24 focus groups. The composition of the focus groups is presented in Table 4 (in alphabetical order).

Table 4: Composition of Focus Groups

	Immigrant Group	Number of Participants		
		Female	Male	Age range
1	Bosnian immigrants	4	3	34-66
2	Cambodian immigrants	10	5	50-70
3	Ethiopian immigrants	5	6	18-71
4	Filipino immigrants	6	6	23-81
5	Indian immigrants	4	6	25-71
6	Iranian immigrants	6	9	26-80
7	Laotian immigrants	3	6	30-57
8	Latino immigrant elderly	4	3	63-77
9	Latino immigrant low-wage workers	4	7	19-50
10	Latina immigrant women	16	n/a	23-49
11	Latino immigrant women CalWORKS recipients	7	n/a	27-56
12	Latino immigrant youth (with parental permission)	1	1	high school
13	Mexican immigrants	4	0	33-75
14	Muslim immigrant women CalWORKS recipients	8	n/a	30-57
15	Nicaraguan and Salvadoran immigrants	7	1	13-48
16	People's Republic of China immigrants	6	7	17-70
17	Professional immigrants not working in their profession	4	4	33-66
18	Russian immigrants	5	6	all >65
19	Somali female immigrants	7	n/a	26-50
20	Somali male immigrants	n/a	9	20-63
21	South Korean immigrants	4	4	20-seniors
22	Taiwanese immigrants	4	4	45-84
23	Vietnamese immigrants	5	5	24-66
24	Vietnamese immigrant CalWORKS recipients	5	0	26-42

Focus groups facilitators were recruited whose native language was that of the target population for the group, were fluent in English, literate in both languages, and able to translate the focus group discussion into a written English report. The facilitators were responsible for recruiting participants that met the criteria for each group. For the groups of general immigrants, an effort was made to recruit a mix of participants for the following criteria:

- Gender
- Class (professional, working class, welfare recipients)
- Age
- Immigration status (naturalized citizens, permanent residents, refugees, undocumented, and visa overstays)
- Recency of immigration (recent, settled, non-English speakers, fluent in English)

The target number of participants for each focus group was eight to ten. Actual group size ranged from two to sixteen participants. The larger-sized groups resulted from over-recruiting to compensate for an anticipated high no-show rate.

Focus group leaders were trained and provided with a guideline for conducting the focus groups which covered informed consent, confidentiality, and facilitating the discussion. Groups were conducted in the native language of the group participants. Each group was scheduled to last for approximately 2.5 hours. Participants were paid \$30.00. All focus groups were audio-taped, except for three groups which expressed discomfort with the procedure. Each facilitator produced a written focus group report which included a description of the participants, the setting, activities, and a summary of the discussion.

3. *Immigrants Building Community (IBC) Process*

The IBC process is a participatory action research method which complements the single-session focus group approach by providing a forum for immigrants to participate in a series of meetings on a pre-selected range of topics, share their experiences and opinions, and propose solutions to problems:

From the beginning it was repeated that the main purpose of the project (was) not just to collect data on immigrant needs, but also to change their reality... Since this is about the lives of immigrants ...they should really have an active role in doing this, not just someone else who is just working with them.

The IBC process was also viewed as the best means for investigating sensitive issues such as domestic violence.

The IBC process targeted immigrant groups from Bosnia, Iran, Mexico, Somalia, and Vietnam. The groups met for eight sessions between October 1999 and June 2000. The range of topics discussed were:

Housing and Food	ESL and Employment Training
Wages and Income from Public Benefits	Domestic Violence and Criminal Justice
Health Care and Mental Health	Dependent Care & K-12 Education
Community Education and Small Business	Citizenship and Immigration Legal Services

Three paid outreach workers, one volunteer outreach worker, and one staff member were responsible for recruiting participants, planning meetings, and serving as group moderators. Outreach workers were recruited who spoke English fluently and whose native language was that of the target group with which they would work. Several methods were used to recruit participants. Some outreach workers worked for community or immigrant organizations and used their networks and contacts available through these sources. Other outreach workers went door-to-door distributing flyers and explaining the importance of attending the meetings and participating in the process. The staff member recruited Bosnian participants through contacts with three Bosnian organizations in Santa Clara County.

Success in participant recruitment varied significantly. For example, the Vietnamese group was composed primarily of elderly immigrants. The probable reason for the failure to entice younger Vietnamese immigrants was the presence of numerous other Vietnamese organizations and venues for discussion in Santa Clara County. Among Bosnians, it was believed that recent political turmoil in the immigrants' home country may have contributed to reluctance to engage in public discussions on potentially sensitive issues.

Each IBC session was scheduled to last 2.5 hours. All groups met at the same time and in the same location. Participants volunteered their time. Childcare and light refreshments were provided.

The goal of IBC was to recruit and retain a consistent group of at least five participants that would attend all or most sessions. Project staff hoped that such consistency would result in group cohesion and a higher quality of group dynamics so that each discussion could build on the experience of the previous meeting. This goal was best achieved with the Iranian group. Average attendance for this group was fifteen participants, with the majority attending all eight sessions. For the Mexican/Latino group average attendance was six, with four consistent participants. For the Bosnian group average attendance was three with one consistent participant. For the Vietnamese group average attendance was six with four consistent participants. For the Somali group the average attendance was five with three consistent participants. The Somali group was unique in that the recruiter and moderator was a male, while all of the participants were female.

Each session began with a Project staff member welcoming participants in English, introducing the Summit on Immigrant Needs Project, and explaining the intention and expectations of participation in the IBC process. These remarks were then translated

into the respective languages of the groups. Introductory remarks after the first session varied with each group according to consistency of participation. For example, for groups where the participants were changing for each session, it was necessary to reiterate the goals of the Project and the IBC process. In groups with consistent participation, this redundant introduction and explanation were unnecessary. Project staff members were available at all sessions to answer questions or assist as needed. In general, larger groups with consistent participation were able to operate independently, while smaller groups, or those with inconsistent participation, required more moderator/staff support and guidance.

The original plan was that each recruiter would serve as moderator for all sessions and this did occur for some groups, e.g., Somali. In some groups the participants shared or even assumed the moderator role, e.g., the Iranian group. The Project staff had developed guidelines for the moderators to assist them in facilitating discussions. However, the IBC process is intended to be flexible so that it can evolve to meet the goals of individual groups. The moderators allowed the groups to modify their structure and process to accommodate the needs of the groups. Some IBC participants also assisted in preparing for meetings, recruiting other participants, and distributing meeting information to other community members.

Every session concluded with all groups sharing the results of their discussion. Each group's moderator or a participant spoke, either in English or their own language which was then translated for the other groups. The discussion summaries were compiled into written reports by the group moderators.

Several immediate outcomes resulted from the IBC process. Some groups continued to meet on their own and provided ongoing input to the Project staff, including reviewing Project recommendations. Some IBC participants have developed into local leaders and are active in their respective communities. The Iranian group is developing an Iranian Community Center.

4. Contributions of Immigrants Project

The Contribution of Immigrants Project represents an effort to identify and document the contributions of immigrants in general, and particularly for Santa Clara County. A goal of this project was to represent as many immigration groups and social spheres as possible. The project has had to grapple with such fundamental issues as:

- How do you define “contribution?”
- What contributions are considered “positive” and by whom?
- What contributions are considered “negative” and by whom?

The Project staff developed a definition of contribution which would guide the data collection process:

We emphasize positive results of immigrant activities and (the) social processes they either initiated or were engaged in... We include immigrant economic activities, educational, cultural, political and other engagements.

This project utilized a variety of data sources. Primary data was obtained through several questions from the random sample survey, e.g., questions on the use of benefits and resources, having an immigrant employer, political participation, community activism, and education. This data was used to construct tables regarding upward and downward social and economic mobility. Secondary data sources included a number of published studies, monographs, reports, local and national magazines and newspaper articles, scholarly and academic journals, and other literature, texts, and books on immigrants and immigration.

5. The Global Context Project

The purpose of the Global Context Project was to produce a macroanalytical perspective in which to contextualize the other research findings. Project staff was assisted by one intern from Stanford University and one intern from Santa Clara University. The Global Context Project intended to answer two main questions:

1. Why do immigrants leave their home countries?
2. Why do immigrants come to Santa Clara County?

Towards this end, the Global Context Project conducted several activities. First, a policy study group was organized. The Project Director invited policy experts from Stanford University and Santa Clara University to discuss issues related to immigrants coming to Santa Clara County. This group met six times from October 1999 through October 2000. An average of six participants attended each meetings.

Second, a short survey asking about reasons why immigrants left their home countries was conducted with adults enrolled in San Jose City College ESL classes and Adult Education.

Third, a focus group was conducted in June 2000 with eleven community leaders representing eleven countries of origin. These leaders discussed the range of reasons why members of their respective communities had left their home country and settled in Santa Clara County. A video of this discussion group was made and an edited transcript is available (see Appendix).