Strengthening ACE Outreach and Communication with African Families

Cape Town Project Center 2020

For More Information: https://wp.wpi.edu/southafrica/projects/2020-projects/ace/

Abstract

The United States has seen a rise in African immigration in recent years. Our sponsor, African Community Education (ACE), is a nonprofit organization that supports the assimilation of the growing African immigrant and refugee population in Worcester, MA. The project's goal was to improve ACE's outreach and communication methods with its clients. Through interviews, we found that language and technology barriers were the main communication challenges. To address this, we developed community circles and educational videos summarized in a communication guidebook.

Team Members

Sydney Gagne
Liza Hote
Nathan Ng
Jeremy Rhines

Table of Contents

ACE

Executive Summary

Introduction

For many African immigrants and refugees, the United States is seen as a haven to raise a family, an escape from war, or a chance to pursue higher education. In recent years, the United States has seen a rise in African immigration with a growth rate of roughly 50% from 2010 to 2018, more than doubling that of other migrant groups such as Asians and South Americans (Kopf & Nwoye, 2019). On a local scale, 21% of Worcester's population is foreign-born, with nearly a quarter coming from 15 distinct African countries (Seven Hills, 2015). Whether African people immigrate to the U.S. on their own volition or arrive as refugees removed forcibly from their homes, entering and adapting to a brand-new environment is a daunting task accompanied by many challenges. With such an increase in African immigration, hundreds of organizations across the country are working towards compiling the necessary resources to accommodate the incoming immigrant population.

African Community Education

Our sponsor, African Community Education (ACE), is one local nonprofit organization that aims to support the assimilation and education attainment of the African immigrant and refugee families in Worcester. ACE's integration programs include partnership with the Worcester Public Schools system and After School/Saturday programs for students. ACE also offers English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship classes to its clients, who consist of parents and adult members. ACE currently communicates with clients via phone call or in-person visits and is seeking improved outreach and communication methods.

ACE Communication Challenges with African Families

The primary communication challenges between ACE and African families are language and technological barriers. These barriers existed pre-COVID 19 but were exacerbated when the pandemic struck.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this project was to improve the outreach and communication between ACE and the African immigrant and refugee population in Worcester, MA. To achieve this goal, our team followed these objectives:

1. Assess communication needs and strategies between ACE and the African community

2. Analyze potential solutions

3. Develop implementation plans

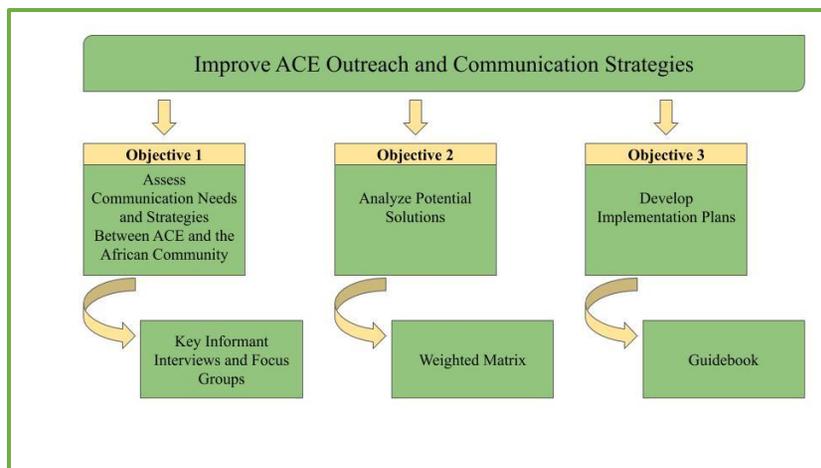Figure 7, shown below, links these objectives to the methods and outcomes.

Figure 7. Methodology plan overview

ACE communication methods and strategies our team proposed.

Table 2. Weighted matrix comparison between current and proposed communication solutions

Characteristic	Weight (1-10)	Communication Method (1-5)				
		In-Person Visits	Phone Communication (call/text)	Emails	Videos	Circles
Convenience for ACE Members	10	5	4	1	4	3
Speed	6	2	4	5	4	4
Clarity	8	5	4	4	5	3
Convenience for ACE	7	1	3	4	3	5
Feasability	7	5	5	3	3	4
Resources Required	7	2	3	3	3	4
Total:		158	173	142	167	169
Grade:		70%	77%	63%	74%	75%
Max Score:		225				

Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups

Our team conducted interviews with an ACE alumnus, a representative from the Massachusetts Organization of African Descendants (MOAD), and a teacher from Worcester Public Schools (WPS). We also held focus groups with ACE clients and interviews with ACE students. The information collected from these interviews helped generate and refine the potential solutions. Additionally, our team scheduled weekly meetings with ACE staff for continuous feedback on the project direction.

Generating and Evaluating Potential Solutions

The solutions our team developed included the community circles, educational videos, and emails. These new solutions were then compared to each other and current communication strategies. Table 2 depicts the evaluation our team conducted in order to quantitively rank current

Community Circles

The community circles are a communication strategy our team suggested to address language barriers. ACE clients are put into groups based on their language and culture. Each group will have an appointed leader, or committee of leaders, who is responsible for being the liaison between the ACE staff and the rest of the members of the group. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 11.


Figure 11. ACE community circle diagram depicting the possible routes of communication

Educational Videos

To address the technological and language barriers, the educational videos could distribute "How-to" and ESL information. The "How-to" videos consist of technological education, such as how to use email and Google Translate. The ESL videos consist of how to read and write the English alphabet, common words and phrases, and conjugation. Our team provided our sponsor with two example videos to follow when creating future educational videos. A screenshot of one of the example videos is included in Figure 15.
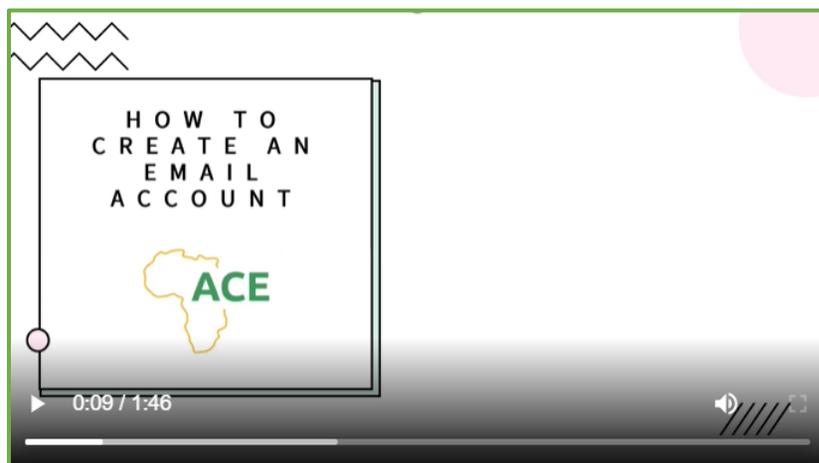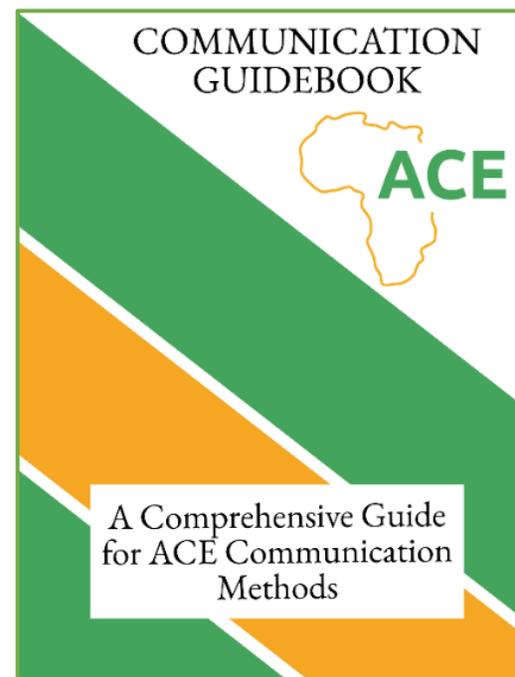

Figure 15. A screenshot of an example video for ACE

Communication Guidebook

The guidebook is the final deliverable our team proposed to ACE. The guidebook encompasses all aspects of the community circles and educational videos including implementation plans. The guidebook cover can be viewed in Figure 9.


Figure 9. ACE Communication Guidebook cover page

Final Recommendations

1. Implement and use the methods outlined in the guidebook

2. Follow the circle implementation plan and begin creating circles as soon as possible

3. Begin making educational videos, starting with the ideas our team has suggested in Figure 16

African Immigrants and Refugees in the United States

African Immigrant Statistics in the U.S.

Over the past few decades, there has been a large increase in the number of African immigrants coming to the United States. By 2018, the sub-Saharan immigrant population reached over two million, increasing by 52% since 2010 as shown in Figure 1 (Batalova et al., 2019; Kopf & Nwoye, 2019). On a more local scale, African immigrants make up 21% of the 38,000 foreign-born residents in Worcester, MA (Seven Hills, 2015).
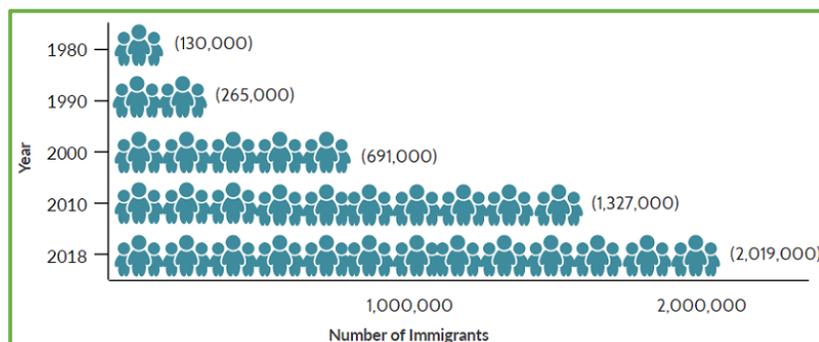
Figure 1. Sub-Saharan African Immigrant population in the United States, 1980-2018 (Batalova et al., 2019)

African immigrants come to the U.S. for a variety of reasons, whether they are students, skilled immigrants, lottery visa recipients, or fleeing refugees (Batalova et al., 2019). Decades ago, most African immigrants were well educated and came to America as students or skilled workers. However, according to Camarota (2018), a recent increase in family migration to the U.S. has led to the arrival of less educated individuals (Camarota, 2018).

Immigrants vs. Refugees

Although refugees are often considered a subset of the immigrant population, their experiences differ from those who relocate on an immigrant visa or lottery system. Immigrants are people who choose to leave their country and are required to go through a long vetting process in order to get an immigrant visa. Once this visa is obtained, they become a lawful permanent resident (LPR). Those who have LPR status can live and work in the United States permanently, and after five years, can apply to be a U.S. citizen (American Immigration Council, 2019).

A refugee, on the other hand, "is someone who has been forced to flee his or her home because of war, violence or persecution, often without warning" (International Rescue Committee, 2018). Unlike immigrants, they do not choose to leave their home country. The move is usually driven by fear for survival and hope for safety in a foreign place (Biron, 2016). Additionally, refugees are unable to return to their home country unless the situation improves (International Rescue Committee, 2018).

Language Barriers

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2009-2013, approximately 895,000 people in the United States spoke African languages. 32% percent of this population spoke English less than "very well" (United States Census Bureau, 2015). In Worcester, the language barrier becomes extremely apparent when looking at the data in Table 1. The

table highlights that more than half of the foreign-born population in Worcester have difficulty speaking English; however, over 80% of the native-born population in Worcester speak only English (Fábos et al., 2015).

Table 1. Languages spoken in Massachusetts vs. Worcester homes (Fábos et al., 2015)

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH	Massachusetts		Worcester city	
	Native	Foreign-born	Native	Foreign-born
Total population	5,589,130	971,465	143,975	37,498
English only	89.30%	18.60%	80.50%	14.90%
Language other than English	10.70%	81.40%	19.50%	85.10%
Speak English less than "very well"	2.20%	44.90%	7.40%	54.10%

With this in mind, ACE serves people from 15 countries throughout Africa shown in Figure 2, including Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Somalia. Coming from a diverse set of countries, this population collectively speaks a wide variety of languages, many of which are only spoken in Africa, like Swahili and Kinyarwanda (ACE, 2020).

Figure 2. A map of ACE families' countries of origin

African Community Education

African Community Education (ACE) is a non-profit organization located in Worcester, MA that provides assistance to both African immigrant and refugee families. They offer events and programs to ease assimilation, provide educational support, and celebrate African culture. Some of these include the After School, Saturday, Mentoring, Family Education, and Outreach programs and events such as the Spring Festival (Gray, 2014), ACE Gala, and Parent Academy (ACE, 2020). They work with students from middle to high school and clients, consisting of parents and adult members.

Programs Offered by ACE

ACE's After School and Saturday programs present students with learning resources to support their successes in the U.S. school system. The After School Program provides immigrant and refugee students with academic support, such as individual tutoring and learning activities (ACE, 2020). Currently, this program is conducted on Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Saturday Program, shown in Figure 3, is another one of ACE's most popular programs. This program provides students with, "a blend of academics, enrichment activities, and experiential learning" (ACE, 2020). Students learn subjects such as English and STEM, participate in outdoor activities, and visit local colleges and learning centers (ACE, 2020).

Figure 3. Students working at the Saturday Program (ACE, 2020)

The Family Education and Outreach programs both offer resources to ACE clients. The Family Education Program provides ESL classes, which is very helpful because a majority of ACE clients do not speak English. The Outreach Program gives families the opportunity to improve their financial and housing situations, employment, and quality of life. A family can be seen attending this program in Figure 4 (ACE, 2020).

Figure 4. Family at the Outreach Program (ACE, 2020)

Figure 5. Photo from ACE's Spring Festival (ACE, 2020)

Finally, events such as the Spring Festival and the ACE Gala provide African immigrants and refugees the chance to express and celebrate their cultures in Worcester. The Spring Festival, seen in Figure 5, features an African buffet, "drumming, dancing and a fashion show" (Gray, 2014). The ACE Gala, illustrated in Figure 6, is a similar event consisting of a fashion show, African food, music, and guest speakers (ACE, 2020).

Figure 6. Photo from ACE's Annual Gala (ACE, 2020)

Current Communication Techniques

The main form of communication between ACE and the African community is through phone calls or home visits. Phone calls are appropriate for students who own their own cell phone and speak English adequately; however, this method can be difficult for parents or other students who do not speak English proficiently. In these cases, home visits are employed because it is easier to communicate face to face with people who speak different languages rather than over the phone. There are a few ACE staff members who collectively speak six languages and are the primary communicators between ACE and the non-English speaking families. These staff members cover a majority of all the languages spoken by the families, but if they are not available, problems may arise.

Furthermore, the current COVID-19 pandemic has posed a new set of challenges, causing communication strategies to change. At-home visits are no longer a viable option due to social distancing guidelines. Communication has shifted to the use of technology, including calling the families, using WhatsApp (a free messaging application the African Community already uses) and talking over Zoom.

Developing Communication Solutions

The project's goal was to improve ACE's outreach and communication methods with African immigrant and refugee families in Worcester, MA. To achieve this goal, our team followed these objectives:

1. Assess communication needs and strategies between ACE and the African community

2. Analyze potential solutions

3. Develop implementation plans

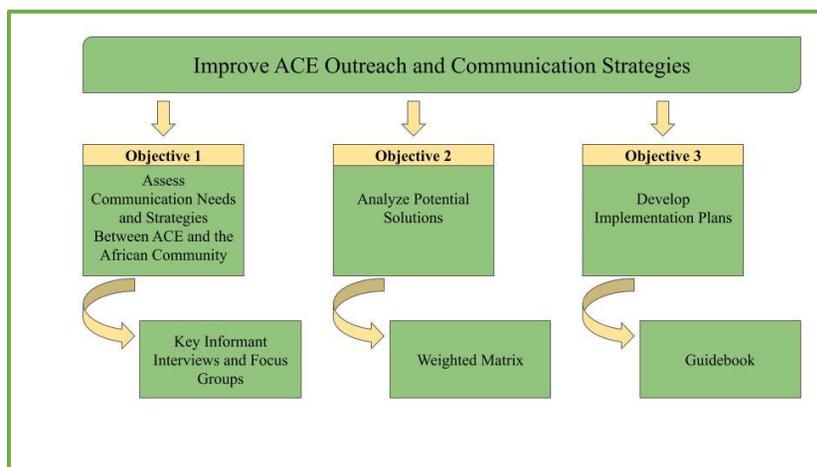Figure 7, shown below, links these objectives to the methods and outcomes.

Figure 7. Methodology plan overview

Assess Communication Needs and Strategies Between ACE and the African Community

To improve ACE's communication with the African population of Worcester, our team needed to first determine the needs of both ACE and the people they serve. This was done through a series of interviews.

To begin, our team conducted an interview with an ACE alumnus who is a current student at WPI. We heard about his ACE experience and discussed the preliminary ideas our team had brainstormed to improve communication. Next, we interviewed a representative from Massachusetts Organization of African Descendants (MOAD), an organization that addresses food insecurity as it pertains to the African community in Worcester. Next, we interviewed a teacher from Worcester Public Schools (WPS). We chose to interview both the MOAD and WPS representatives because they work with the same population as ACE, allowing us to gain insight on how other organizations communicate with the African community.

Furthermore, our team continued to collect information through student interviews and client focus groups. We started with the client focus groups at the Saturday Family Education Program. We met with one French speaking and one Swahili speaking group, as seen in Figure 8. Our team inquired the clients about their experiences as refugees and ACE members. They also gave us their opinions and suggestions on our solution ideas. The student interviews were conducted during the After School Program on Zoom. We had the opportunity to discuss with students about their

experiences with ACE, as well as the types of technology that they and their parents have and are comfortable using.

Figure 8. Picture taken following the Saturday Program ACE parent focus groups

Analyze Potential Solutions

To complete our goal, we conceptualized different ideas that could strengthen the communication between ACE and its clients. We generated these ideas through discussions between our team, ACE representatives, and ACE members. Then, we created a weighted matrix to evaluate the options based on the discussions we had.

One idea was to create community circles which are groups of ACE clients who speak the same language and share a culture. There will be at least one circle per language spoken by ACE clients. Examples include French, Swahili, Arabic, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, and English-speaking circles. The languages will have to be adapted with time depending on immigration trends. Each of these circles will have a leader, or a leader committee, that ACE can relay information/announcements to. The leaders will then communicate the information to the members of their respective circles, which saves ACE the time it would take to contact everyone individually.

Our next idea was to create educational videos. The videos can take information that usually needs to be repeated and make it available to everyone at any time. The videos could include How-To and teaching English topics. This saves ACE from repeating information and allows ACE members to watch on their own.

Finally, one of our early ideas was the use of email. Technology is an important part of daily life in the United States, especially in most jobs. Thus, it is an important skill that immigrants and refugees could learn to help them succeed in the workplace. Additionally, email is a form of communication that would allow ACE to reach multiple people instantaneously. The message contents can also be translated into different languages using a translation service like Google Translate. However, this strategy requires all clients to have an email address as well as have the knowledge and means to use it.

The community circles, educational videos, and email solutions could be convenient for ACE, but it is also important that these solutions are convenient for its clients as well. To achieve this, we discussed these ideas during the client focus groups to get their feedback and opinions on the solutions. From there, we created a weighted matrix to compare the potential and current methods.

The data collected for the matrix was based on both the ACE staff and members' opinions on the effectiveness of each method. We created a list of key characteristics that a successful communication technique should have. Using this list, we designated numerical values (1-10) to each of the listed characteristics. This value is the characteristic's "weight" and serves as an indicator for how important each characteristic is to the method's future success. Our group then assigned a series of numbers to each method according to how well that method met the pre-established criterion (1-5). The ranking used "1" as a poor ranking and the upper bound (5 or 10) representing a good ranking. This entire process resulted into a weighted matrix as shown in Table 2. This matrix allowed us to quantitatively determine which communication methods are more effective for ACE and its clients.

Develop Implementation Plans

Once we determined which solutions to move forward with, our team created a plan for ACE to implement the ideas into ACE's existing communication framework. We decided to create a communication guidebook for ACE to use. The information gathered from the key informant interviews laid the groundwork for the guidebook. Additionally, our team met with Timon Dhego, ACE's Family Education Program coordinator; Benjamin Kagigi, ACE's outreach manager; and Sakina Fundi, an ACE outreach worker; this was done to develop implementation plans for both the community circles and instructional videos that are both feasible and effective.

Communication Needs and Strategies Between ACE and the African Community

Our team learned from the ACE alumnus interview that ACE effectively assists families with financials and employment. Occasionally, ACE resorts to communicating with families using signs and pictures when staff members who speak the necessary language(s) are not available. Finally, we were told that the majority of clients are illiterate and have little experience with technology. The students, on the other hand, can read and write in English (still below fluent) and typically help their parents with operating technology.

From the MOAD representative interview, we learned that their organization has an email alias for select members of businesses, churches, and African groups in Worcester who then relay information to their respective members. The MOAD representative mentioned that email is not its primary way of spreading information because the majority of the African immigrant and refugee community is not yet comfortable using it. As such, MOAD utilizes a Facebook page, a local African radio station, and flyers to place in local African restaurants. However, our team found that these methods are not appropriate for ACE, as the organization is smaller than MOAD.

Furthermore, WPS has a translation department that allows them to put flyers or announcements into the necessary languages. This is not a feasible option for ACE because ACE is a nonprofit and it works with a wide range of languages

that are uncommon in the U.S. WPS also uses an app called Talking Points. This app allows students to choose their preferred language and receive all messages in that language. Thus, when a teacher sends a message in English, the app automatically translates the message into the preferred language and vice versa. However, we learned during our interviews that most of the ACE clients and students are already comfortable using WhatsApp. The clients who use WhatsApp typically record voice messages rather than writing them because they are illiterate.

Next, our team observed that most students are able to speak English well enough to hold a conversation. The students also mentioned they have access to a cell phone and computer at home. Most students reported knowing how to use both Zoom and email; however, they do not check their email frequently.

During the focus groups, many ACE clients expressed that their significant other/friends could not regularly attend ACE's Family Education because of schedule conflicts. They mentioned that they want ACE to distribute information on obtaining a driver's license and networking opportunities.

Analysis of Potential Solutions

Community Circle

After talking with our sponsors, our team understood that the main issues with communicating with African families are language and technological barriers. The language barriers are a challenge because ACE has a very diverse population that speaks a multitude of languages. ACE has few staff members who can speak the languages spoken by all its clients. This means that the staff members that speak these languages are responsible for communicating this information to clients.

Originally, the idea of circles addressed the language barrier when communicating between ACE staff members and clients. When first discussed with our sponsor, they liked the idea because it would save them time. Instead of calling every client individually, they could call a few, and those leaders would then be responsible for spreading the information to the rest of the group. ACE clients mentioned during the focus group that they have already been trained in a specialty like hair dressing or clothing making; however, they find it challenging to acquire jobs in those fields. The clients suggested the circles could be a networking opportunity, that connects clients with one another. This client feedback ultimately contributed to our final proposal of the community circles: using them to promote a sense of community within ACE.

When the community circles were more substantially realized, our team and the ACE outreach team collaborated on the logistics of implementing the circles. The outreach team was concerned with how the leaders were going to be selected. Their main criteria were that the leaders had to be passionate and wanted to volunteer their time to fill this position. As such, we decided to let the circle members choose their own leaders based on who was willing to volunteer. Furthermore, it expressed that the ACE Outreach team should first introduce the idea to a few select groups, which we decided to be the Swahili, French, and Kinyarwanda circles. Our team then created a standardized

presentation that will be used to introduce the idea to ACE community members.

Educational Videos

As previously discussed, language barriers make it very difficult for ACE to share information to the ACE members because there are only a few staff members who can speak the desired languages. This poses an issue when there is information that all ACE members need as it must be translated into every language and given to each member individually. This type of communication drains the ACE staff who speak the African languages. Since most clients do not speak English and cannot read or write in their respective languages, verbal communication is a necessity. To reduce repeating information, our team decided that ACE could make educational videos. Once made, videos could be translated into different languages for all ACE members to utilize.

The initial thought for the content of the videos was "How-To" information. For example, ACE could make videos on how to use email and how to use translation services like Google Translate. Our team introduced this idea to the clients during the focus group. The general feedback from the clients was that the videos were a good idea, and they even had suggestions for other videos ACE could make. We found that ACE clients want to learn more about the Worcester public transportation system and the steps to get a driver's license. They also told us that the Family Education Program on Saturdays, the only day ACE offers English classes, is not enough time to learn English. They mentioned that they need more practice with writing, which

encouraged the idea of a video on writing the alphabet. Therefore, our team deduced that How-To and ESL would be the most beneficial topics to cover, which are elaborated on in Figure 16.

Email

Our team began brainstorming ideas to implement email into ACE's communication infrastructure as email is effective for quick distribution of longer announcements or information. However, according to information gathered from ACE staff and MOAD, introducing email to ACE clients will be a long process because the clients do not currently have the digital literacy to send and receive emails. To address this issue, we suggested ACE use the educational videos to teach clients how to reliably communicate via email. Additionally, the students can familiarize their parents with navigating an email website since all the students that were interviewed at the After School Program were comfortable using email.

Once all the ACE clients are comfortable using email, ACE could combine email with the community circle solution by creating email aliases for each circle. Since the circles are constructed around a common language, an ACE staff member will be able to write an email, have it translated, and sent out by the circle leaders in each of the necessary languages. Those who cannot read can use websites like Google Translate to read the information out loud; ACE could make a video on how to do this.

Weighted Matrix Evaluation

Using the matrix shown in Table 2, we examined which methods are more effective and where other lower scoring methods stand to improve. Through this weighted matrix, our group quantitatively determined which communication methods are more effective for both ACE and ACE members.

The finalized weighted matrix indicates that implementing emails into ACE's communication infrastructure at this time is less than optimal. It also showed that creating educational videos is feasible and establishing community circles could be a strong contender as a main form of communication. Under both characteristics, convenience for ACE and resources required, ACE's current modes of communication (in-person and phone communication) have room for improvement. Both methods require an ACE staff member to dedicate a significant portion of his or her time to individually communicate information out to members. Videos dramatically reduce the amount of time spent sending information; ACE can refer clients to these videos and answer more specific questions should the clients have any. With the integration of community circles, ACE staff could communicate messages to community circle leaders who then relay the information to the larger group. This method provides ACE with further flexibility in scheduling. Based on the outcomes of the weighted matrix, we concluded that the implementation of educational videos and community circles would undoubtedly improve ACE's communication system.

Table 2. Weighted matrix comparison between current and proposed communication solutions

Characteristic	Weight (1-10)	Communication Method (1-5)				
		In-Person Visits	Phone Communication (call/text)	Emails	Videos	Circles
Convenience for ACE Members	10	5	4	1	4	3
Speed	6	2	4	5	4	4
Clarity	8	5	4	4	5	3
Convenience for ACE	7	1	3	4	3	5
Feasability	7	5	5	3	3	4
Resources Required	7	2	3	3	3	4
Total:		158	173	142	167	169
Grade:		70%	77%	63%	74%	75%
Max Score:		225				

Implementation Plans

Following the evaluation process of current and prospective ACE communication strategies, our team proceeded to establish the community circles and educational videos. We created a guidebook that covers both communication methods being proposed and contains a specific section for a community circle implementation plan. Our team also constructed a presentation for ACE to teach others about the idea and logistics behind the community circles. Lastly, we produced video examples for ACE to follow when making future educational videos.

Guidebook

To begin, the guidebook is called: *A Comprehensive Guide for ACE Communication Methods*, as seen in Figure 9. As the title suggests, the guidebook outlines how to effectively implement the new communication methods. This guidebook will be uploaded to ACE's Google Drive for all current and future ACE staff members to refer to as needed.

After the introduction, the first chapter provides a step-by-step process of how to select a communication method based on the recipient and the type of information that is being communicated. Included in this chapter is the tool seen in Figure 10 for ACE representatives to guide their communication decisions. The diagram incorporates both current and new communication methods. This is followed by a detailed chapter explaining the community circle concept.
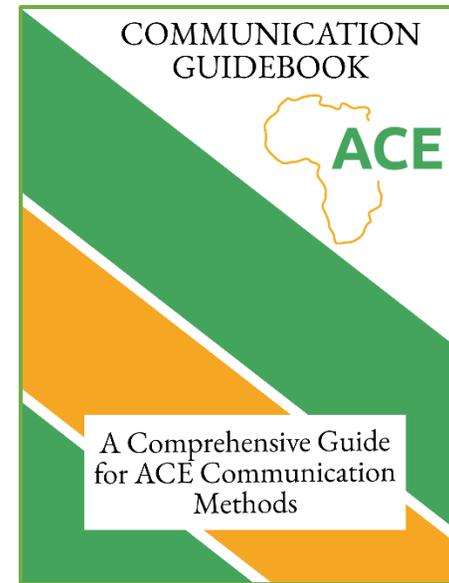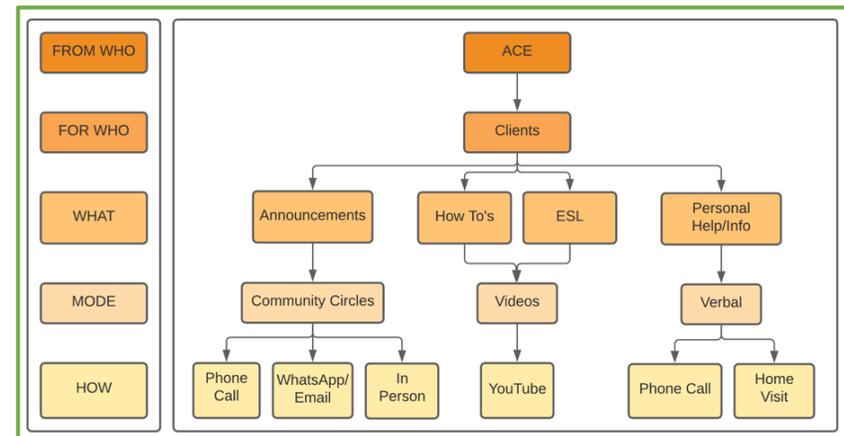
Figure 9. ACE Communication Guidebook cover page

Figure 10. Communication method selection flowchart

Figure 11. ACE community circle diagram

a sense of community. Lastly, the circle implementation plan section covers the steps needed to fully implement the circles.

Finally, the guidebook illustrates how ACE can create the educational videos for their clients. Similar to the WhatsApp module, this chapter serves as a manual for how to write, record, translate, and upload the educational videos to YouTube. Each step includes visuals to guide ACE staff members in creating the videos. Sample pages from this section are illustrated in Figure 12.

The community circle section highlights mechanics, communication, future potential, and the implementation plan. To begin, the circle mechanics explain the roles of each position in the circle illustrated in Figure 11. This component explains how to establish circle leaders, create new circles, add new families, and maintain the circles. Next, the communication via circles part outlines verbal communication including in-person, phone calls, and WhatsApp. The WhatsApp module is designed to explain both when and how to use the application. The future of ACE circles segment details how to use the circles to promote educational videos, email usage, and

Figure 12. Sample pages from the guidebook chapter on video creation

Community Circle Implementation Plan

The community circle implementation plan is a step-by-step guide on how to incorporate the community circles within ACE's current communication framework. ACE staff could use this document to ultimately implement the community circles in their organization. The plan has three general steps: introduce, grow, and strengthen. The general outline of the plan is to first introduce the idea to a select group of people and have a trial period. Then, grow the circles by incorporating the rest of the members. This step would start with the clients, then move on to the students. The strengthen section incorporates other members affiliated with ACE including alumni, mentors, student ambassadors, and workforce program students. A timetable for the implementation process is provided in Figure 13.

Standardized Presentation

The standardized presentation, depicted in Figure 14, goes over the community circles and the roles of each person involved. The purpose is to inform to clients, ACE staff, ACE students, mentors, and alumni about the circles. Since it is standardized, it can be used to implement the circles as well as introduce the idea to new families coming to the United States.

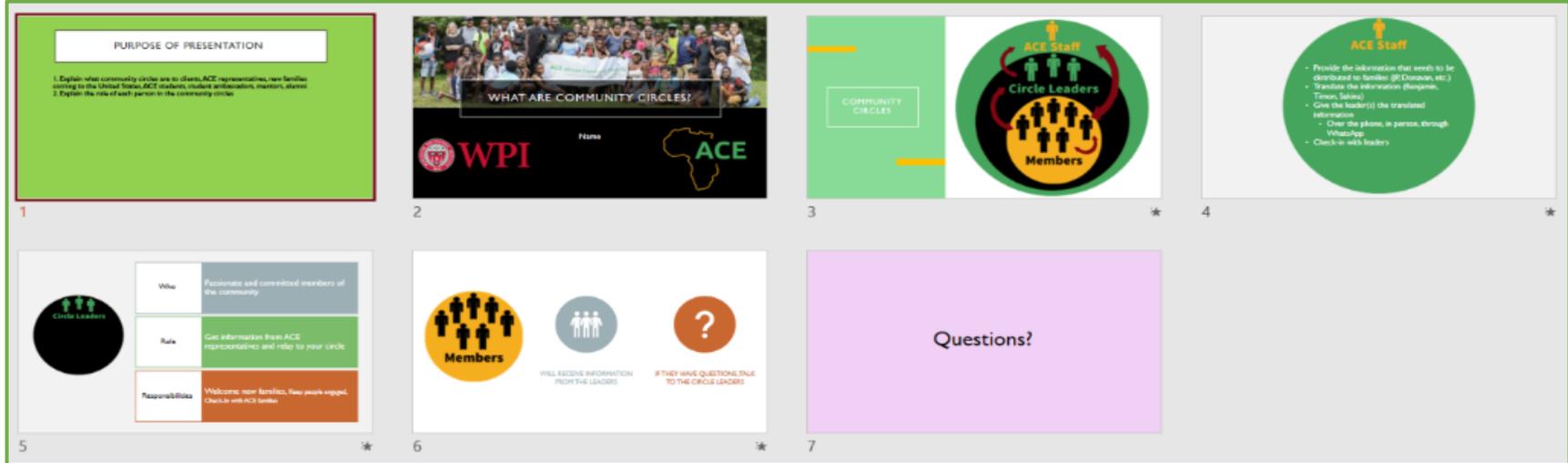Figure 13. Proposed ACE community circle implementation timetable

Figure 14. The standardized slide deck for ACE to use to teach others about the community circle structure

Example Videos

To jump start educational video production, our team developed a prototype video that covers a straightforward topic: how to make an email account. This video serves as an example for future videos that ACE could create. Our team also went through the translation process and created a French version of the video. The two videos (one seen below in Figure 15) provides ACE with an example of how educational videos could look in order to be concise and keep the translation process as simple as possible. Because of this, ACE can build an archive of videos that are both easy for ACE staff to make and understandable for the clients.
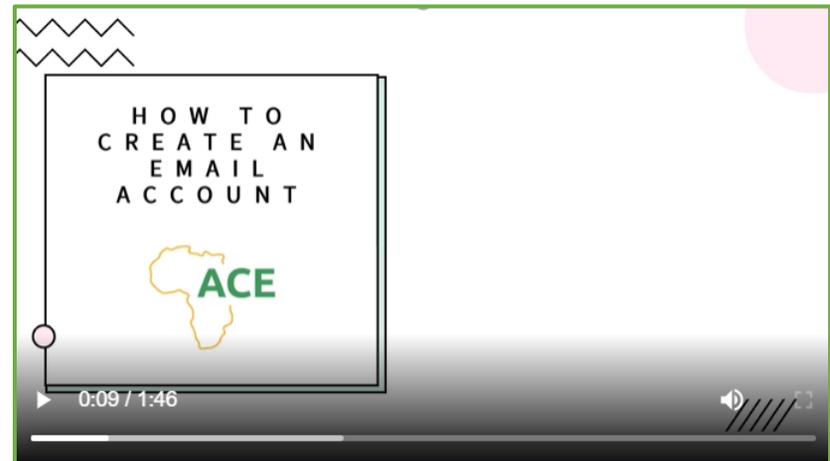

Figure 15. A screenshot of an example video for ACE

Recommendations

1. Implement and Use Methods Outlined in the Guidebook

We strongly recommend that all ACE staff who directly communicate with the African community read the guidebook; it will be helpful when selecting a communication method, addressing a question about the community circles, or creating an educational video. Additionally, guidebook parts could be used at orientation for new staff to the circles and educational videos. ACE staff are also encouraged to add to the guidebook as they see fit. For example, if there is a change to the way that the community circles will operate, the change should be noted in the guidebook for other ACE employees to refer to. This is important, as it will keep the guidebook up to date, and relevant for years to come. It should be noted that if changes to the guidebook are made or something new is added, it would be best to update the staff on the changes to guarantee everyone is on the same page.

2. Follow the Circle Implementation Plan

We recommend ACE staff read through the circle implementation plan and follow the steps our team suggested to introduce, grow, and strengthen the circles. The steps in this document could be very helpful in creating the circles and making them successful. Our team also suggests that ACE starts to make circles now to be utilized as soon as possible. To supplement this process, we recommend utilizing the standardized presentation as it will explain the circles to clients, students, staff, alumni, and new families joining ACE.

3. Start Creating Videos

In the near future, starting to create and adding educational videos to ACE's YouTube channel could save ACE time and effort. Our team has concluded from ACE client feedback that developing an instructional video archive will be beneficial for ACE staff and members. Having an online library that can be accessed from anywhere at any time allows members to get the information they need at a moment's notice with the convenience of being able to stop, rewind, or fast forward at will.

Figure 16. Potential educational video topics for ACE to create

Furthermore, we have included some video ideas to start with, which fall into two categories: "How-To" and ESL videos, as seen in Figure 16. Moving forward, we suggest that ACE develops a video curriculum that outlines what topics it wants to cover with these videos. Our team also recommends blending the idea of creating the educational videos with the community circle structure. Many of the ACE members can speak multiple languages and could play a role in translating videos. If further help is required, ACE could reach out to ACE alumni to create these videos as well.

References

ACE: African Community Education. (n.d.). https://www.africancommunityeducation.org/

American Immigration Council. (2019). *How the United States immigration system works.* https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/how-united-states-immigration-system-works

Batalova, J., & Echeverria-Estrada, C. (2019, November 6). *Sub-Saharan African immigrants in the United States.* Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/sub-saharan-african-immigrants-united-states-2018

Biron, H. L. (2016). *Refugee youth challenges and unique needs in Worcester Public Schools that are satisfied by African Community Education.* [Master's thesis, Clark University]. Clark Digital Commons. https://commons.clarku.edu/idce_masters_papers/76

Camarota, S. A. (2018, January 30). *As African immigration has grown, education level has declined.* Center for Immigration Studies. https://cis.org/Camarota/African-Immigration-Has-Grown-Education-Level-Has-Declined

Fábos, A., Pilgrim, M., Said-Ali, M., Krahe, J., & Osiller, Z. (2015). *Understanding refugees in Worcester, MA.* Clark Digital Commons. Commons.clarku.edu/mosakowskiinstitute/32/.

Gray, S. (2014, April 10). *ACE Spring Festival marks eight years of helping immigrant African families thrive.* UMass Med News. https://www.umassmed.edu/news/news-archives/2014/04/ace-spring-festival-marks-eight-years-of-helping-immigrant-african-families-thrive/

International Rescue Committee. (2018). *Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants: What's the difference?* https://www.rescue.org/article/migrants-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-immigrants-whats-difference

Kopf, D., &. Nwoye, C. I., (2019). *African migration to the United States is the fastest-rising-in spite of Trump.* Retrieved from https://qz.com/africa/1727550/despite-trump-african-immigration-is-fastest-rising-to-usa/

Seven Hills Foundation. (2015). *The foreign-born population of Worcester, Massachusetts.* https://www.sevenhills.org/uploads/ForeignBornStudy.pdf

United States Census Bureau. (2015, October 28). *Detailed Languages Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English.* https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html.

Acknowledgements

Our team would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance and guidance throughout the duration of this project:

- **JP Perkins, Donovan Snyder, Benjamin Kagigi, and Timon Dhego** for working with us and helping us develop our ideas into reality

- **Scott Jiusto and Gbetonmasse Somasse** for their contribution and helpful feedback throughout the course of the project

- **ACE Parents and Students** for sharing their opinions and ACE experience with us

- **All Interview Participants** for taking the time to discuss with us this term