

Northwest University

Home: Engaging Local Communities to Support New Americans

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Integrative Project II: Thesis

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Dedication

To all those who have made and are making a new life in the U.S.—May this project help make this country we share a little more welcoming.

To all those working hard to welcome and support our new neighbors—May this project aid you in engaging and inspiring others to join your endeavors.

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

BCCO: Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio
 COTA: Central Ohio Transit Authority
 CRIS: Community Refugee and Immigration Services
 CWS: Church World Service
 DOS: Department of State
 DV: Diversity Visa
 FHA: Fair Housing Act
 IDP: internally displaced person
 ORR: Office of Refugee Resettlement
 R&P: resettlement and placement
 RCO: refugee-run community organization
 RIC: Riverview International Center
 RRA: refugee resettlement agency
 UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

Introduction

Freedom of movement should be a human right, but forced migration involves multiple injustices. Refugee, Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery immigrant, immigrant, migrant, undocumented immigrant, illegal alien, internally displaced person, New American¹—there are many terms, positive and negative, applied to those who leave home. Even forced migration is a complex phenomenon. Individuals and families take different paths geographically, experientially, and procedurally. For some, resettlement in a third country is their destination although arriving on U.S. soil is hardly an ending. Life goes on. This new life includes adjustment and learning, and, even after arrival, inequalities and challenges may remain.

While it may be easy to view resettlement as the end of a refugee's journey, it is really the beginning of the next chapter. Establishing a new life in the U.S. continues long after the

¹A term used to refer to refugees after their arrival in the U.S.

end of the 90-day period prescribed by policy.² Effective resettlement would acknowledge refugees' diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs by offering services that could be more customizable. Unfortunately, U.S. resettlement policy does not adequately address refugee diversity; this policy weakness limits the ability of resettlement organizations to appropriately support their clients. These limitations combine with existing challenges to create barriers to well-being for New Americans.

To provide refugees resettled in Columbus with more support, Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) needs to provide the wider Columbus community pathways to engagement through education and practical means for involvement in supporting New Americans. By forging connections with individuals, groups, organizations, and local government, CRIS can engage community resources for immigrant families who need extended support in specific areas. Based on archival research and fieldwork with immigrants and immigrant support staff, this thesis explores certain challenges immigrants face in the U.S. and the constraints resettlement organizations face in providing resettled refugees the support they need. In Appendix A, this thesis provides a series of educational pamphlets that immigrant support staff serving various communities can use to educate and engage their local communities to make available additional resources in support of immigrants beyond organizational capacity. This thesis will cover the following topics: research, context, problem, and project foundation.

² Eligibility time limits for services vary (Angela Plummer "Personal Interview").

Graduate Research

This section will discuss the fieldwork context, research methods, research questions, the fieldwork-project connection, and some personal reflections on fieldwork.

Fieldwork Context

Research was based in Columbus, OH. Columbus has a population of 905,748, of which 13.3% is foreign-born, compared to only 4.8% in Ohio (“Columbus city, Ohio”). The city has a history of immigrant populations and resettlement (Kefa Otiso and Bruce Smith 133, 135-136; Abdi; “About”). I conducted fieldwork over the summer of 2021 and into the fall. Almost all research was remote due to the coronavirus pandemic which severely limited the opportunity for observation. Although being on-site would have been preferable, digital technology allowed me to contact individuals in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Washington, California, and Texas. Fieldwork included interviews, meetings, and archival research.

My fieldwork began through a partnership with CRIS, a Columbus resettlement organization. In 1995, CRIS started as a section “of the Buddhamamaka Society, Inc., a mutual assistance association founded...by refugees from Laos” (“About”). CRIS was thus born out of an immigrant community. CRIS became a refugee resettlement organization in 2001, as a partner to Church World Service, and has resettled Afghan, Bhutanese, Burmese, Congolese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Iraqi, Somalian, and Syrian refugees (“About,” “Services: Who We Serve”). Crisohio.org records, “CRIS is an independent non-profit organization that serves the refugee and immigrant populations in Central Ohio. We have over 50 staff members from all over the world” (“About”). CRIS provided contacts for multiple staff members, several refugees, and two apartment complex managers.

I completed research through additional channels. Riverview International Center (RIC) serves Diversity Visa Lottery immigrants (Diane Linton). RIC provided two staff and several immigrant contacts. One staff member of the Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio (BCCO) provided an interview. Additional interviews came from other organizations and immigrants. My research was a mix of information from staff and immigrants in Ohio and in other states.

Research

Methodology

Initially conceived as a case study with CRIS, this project morphed to include contacts from multiple sources making it a basic qualitative study. Thus, this project was “*emergent and flexible*” (italics original) (Sharan Merriam and Elizabeth Tisdell 18). Interviewing individuals allowed me to explore immigrant experiences to a depth not possible through a quantitative approach like a survey. It also allowed me flexibility to follow up on interesting comments by interviewees. Merriam and Tisdell write, “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (15). Qualitative research is personal in nature. The research sample is “usually...nonrandom, *purposeful*, and small” (italics original) (Merriam and Tisdell 18). The focus is on understanding individual experiences in the local context. Carol Grbich writes, “[M]ost forms of qualitative research now have an established postmodern position.... Postmodernism favors descriptive and individual interpreted mini-narratives, which provide explanations for small-scale situations located within particular contexts” (qtd. In Merriam and Tisdell 11). Qualitative research is a good choice for developing effective community development interventions.

Good intentions are insufficient. William Easterly describes how mosquito bed nets meant for poor families did not necessarily reach them as “nets [were] often diverted to the black market, [became] out of stock in health clinics, or [wound] up being used as fishing nets or wedding veils” (13-14). The desire to help must translate into effective implementation. One way to help ensure local effectiveness is contextualization. Christine Olsen, during graduate fieldwork in Senegal, records her experience of “presum[ing] that World Vision must buy cars and help drive pregnant mothers to the health clinic for birthing” and then hearing from mothers that they wanted to give birth at home (3, 37-38). Understanding the local context is important for multiple reasons. Dwight Conquergood displayed contextualization during his health theater work in the Ban Vinai refugee camp by respecting Hmong religious beliefs concerning tigers and masks and by adopting suggestions which made the performance more authentic to the culture (175, 184-185). A qualitative approach, with its focus on individual experiences, provides an important source of information for contextualization and can test the applicability of theoretical knowledge in the local context.

Finally, a qualitative design allows for the magnification of individual refugee and immigrant experiences. Angela Plummer of CRIS mentioned, “Everybody’s talking about the need for affordable housing..., but the language barrier and the cultural barriers are an added component” going on to provide the example of how “telling someone to make a phone call [to code enforcement] when they don’t speak English isn’t really helpful” (“Personal Interview”). While it may be obvious that immigration can be challenging, in practice, non-refugees may not understand all of these challenges. Personal narratives also allow immigration outsiders a chance to see the individual, human stories of immigration. Listening to local communities and

marginalized individuals is important (Cynthia Moe-Lobeda 168-170, Bryant Myers 195, 231-233). This listening counterbalances academic non-immigrant work on immigration with an emic view of resettlement from those who have lived it.

Logistics

Fieldwork was composed of interviews, archival research, and several other fieldwork activities. Interviews³ occurred virtually or by phone. I audio-recorded many interviews obtaining consent from interviewees. I also typically took notes. While I prepared questions, interviews were semi-structured allowing me to follow up on interesting points. Interviewees included CRIS staff, RIC staff, a BCCO staff member, staff from other resettlement organizations, immigrants resettled through CRIS, immigrant clients served by RIC, other immigrants contacted through academic connections, and two apartment complex managers. Participants came from a variety of backgrounds and represented several stakeholder groups.

I also conducted archival research. Topics included housing, domicile, immigrant perceptions of space, resilience, immigrant integration, resettlement policy, and trauma. A significant amount of scholarship has come out of the U.K., Canada, and Australia. Archival research and interviews co-support limitations facing resettlement agencies. I also read books or sections of books on refugee and immigration topics. Along with interviews, archival research provided a significant source of information.

Lastly, I attended two events at RIC's office, which provided an unplanned opportunity to conduct an interview. I attended and took notes at weekly CRIS resettlement meetings. I also

³ One interview was conducted in Spanish. All others were in English. One interview with two women and a girl included translation provided by the girl. (This latter interview was the only one to occur in person.)

participated in two webinars: a Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) training for CRIS and a training for a new Pittsburgh initiative entitled “New Homes for New Refugees: A Template for Creating a Welcoming Landlord Network in Your Community.”

Research Questions

My pre-fieldwork study proposal focused on the following question: *How can barriers to housing be addressed in a contextualized, scalable manner which supports the agency of refugee communities?* During fieldwork and project brainstorming, I focused in on housing for new arrivals. New arrival housing, however, is highly complex, and I subsequently settled on creating educational materials to engage community resources and advocacy for resettled refugees. A research question for this final focus follows: *How can refugee resettlement organizations increase support for their clients in light of the policy and funding limitations they face?*

Connections

Research revealed problems facing both refugees and resettlement organizations. Although the project’s focus shifted, the housing data supports the need for collaboration between immigrant support organizations and the broader local community. Resettlement capacity to meet needs is hamstrung by a poor policy and funding structure with resettlement funding effectively prioritizing government policy over refugee needs. This is ineffective because resettlement staff and New Americans know what their needs are. Such an approach acts as a silencing, marginalizing force. Resettlement support staff may offer support outside of funded policy activities, whether this is through other funding or through employees volunteering their time (Dan Trudeau 2816, 2824), but limitations remain a problem. Plummer

noted, “[W]e had a federally funded program that served secondary migrants.... When that program went away there were still people who...needed assistance but we weren't necessarily funded to serve them and might not be able to provide services” (“Project Question”). Refugees are not the only ones to face challenges. DV Lottery immigrants receive no support after arrival (Diane Linton). There is great need to both improve the aid available to refugees and to increase support for other immigrants.

While building organizational capacity in resettlement and legislating support for other immigrant groups are long-term solutions, such approaches require significant change. This project takes an alternate approach looking at a more immediate change method through community resources. By engaging community time, money, materials, real estate, and knowledge, immigrant support organizations can expand support beyond organizational capacity. Additionally, policy change cannot address all barriers because New Americans live, work, worship, attend school, and socialize in communities. It is also necessary to build just, healthy relationships between immigrant and native-born communities.

Reflection

As an immigrant’s daughter, I grew up being taught to value more than one culture, and my background has made me more open to immigration. My research and reading have shown me the brokenness of immigration. Forced migration displays much brokenness, and current U.S. responses to immigration are inadequate. My research has helped nurture a desire to be involved in change-making for immigrant communities. This research has also opened immigration as a potential future field of work.

During this research, I was challenged by some of my data. Recently arrived immigrants may not understand how to take care of American houses or use some appliances (Simon Kasongo,⁴ Jhuma Acharya, Josie Marks⁵). At first, such information seemed to negatively view refugees without reason, but several interviewees, including two former immigrants, mentioned this issue forcing me to accept the data. This demonstrates the complexity of restarting one's life in a new country as well as the sensitivity with which Americans should view immigrants. Realizing that immigrants face a learning curve requires accepting vulnerability without victimization. My research impressed upon me the need to understand refugee diversity and immigration complexity.

Context

To understand the context of refugee resettlement, I will cover some general information, briefly explore lessons from history, and quickly cover modern resettlement. Throughout my thesis, I will present a paradigm for healthy, holistic engagement with immigrant communities because material support of resettled refugees is not sufficient to create well-being.

Overview

People move. This movement may be chosen or forced; sometimes it is both. *Immigration* refers to a range of people movements. The sensitive, committed individual will reject basic dichotomies in favor of more nuanced understandings. *Refugee* broadly refers to those who have fled their homes. Not all displaced individuals have official refugee recognition

⁴ Pseudonym

⁵ Pseudonym

through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and many people migrate without documentation falling outside of refugee and asylum seeker figures.

Even though it does not include all displaced persons, the UNHCR definition of a refugee is often cited. The UNHCR defines a refugee as someone who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (“The 1951 Refugee Convention” 14; Article 1, Section A, Subsection 2). Immigration presents a sizeable field of study, so my thesis considers documented immigration to the United States with a focus on refugees.

Historic

U.S. immigration history can help shape best practices. Despite America’s image as a land of immigrants, there have been both immigration advocates and opponents throughout the years. In the early 20th century, some looked down on immigrants from the south and east of Europe (Carl Bon Tempo 12-13). America generally remained open to immigrants until World War I but enacted prohibitions against Chinese individuals and other undesirable immigrants (Bon Tempo 13). This was discriminatory. In the 1920s, spurred on by post-WWI economic issues and xenophobia, the national origins quota system limited eastern hemisphere immigration and gave more visas to certain countries (e.g., Great Britain) than others (e.g., Italy) (Bon Tempo 13-14). Tragically, WWII was a moral low point in refugee admissions. The first U.S. refugee resettlement program began after WWII in light of the U.S.’s failure to accept Jewish refugees fleeing Naziism (Bon Tempo 1). After WWII, American engagement with

refugee matters was impacted by both Cold War politics and domestic issues (Bon Tempo 2-5). By understanding past attitudes and policies, host communities can approach modern refugee resettlement better prepared to relate in life-nurturing ways.

During the early Cold War, refugees were understood as European anti-communists (Bon Tempo 5, 8). *European anti-communist* and *democracy-supporting American* are ideologically and culturally similar. This perception of refugees was used to promote the acceptance of Hungarians and later Cubans; yet Haitians, for several reasons including the fact that they did not fit into the anti-communist mold, received less support than Cubans did (Bon Tempo 75-80, 109-115). Historically, some immigrants were considered worthier than others. Host communities must reflect on their perceptions of who is a legitimate immigrant.

American reactions to immigrants, at times ethnocentric, have been both positive and negative. Ethnocentrism is the “sociological term” that “denotes belief in the inherent superiority of one’s own ethnic group or culture” (Brenda Salter McNeil 38). In the past, refugee resettlement was more assimilationist. In the 1920s, immigrants from certain regions were considered unable to adapt to American values, an idea based on eugenics (Bon Tempo 14). During the Hungarian crisis (which began in 1956), the government stressed to Americans that these “refugees were not very different from them” (Bon Tempo 60, 75). Such attitudes predicate immigration on whether the immigrant can live up to an American identity. It does not ask the immigrant whether she can adopt American values and assumes that American values are the standard. Such thinking precludes the possibility that host communities can learn from refugees.

Fear of those who are *other* is not new in the U.S. Bon Tempo notes, “World War II...roused fears that recent immigrants and foreign nationals living in the United States...endangered national security” because they might hold Nazi loyalties (19). Much later, the screening of Cuban immigrants would focus on finding “subversives, usually defined as agents of the Castro government” demonstrating a shift away from the screening for communist sympathies “of the early 1950s” (Bon Tempo 106-107). Although there are legitimate reasons for screening, such policies are problematic because they suggest immigrants are linked to danger. Policies must be crafted with careful reflection of how they portray real human beings.

America’s long history of immigration provides a strong argument for continuing to welcome immigrants but also demonstrates a history of discrimination and othering to be avoided. Julia Young suggests that the nativism of the 1920s has returned (227). Although discrimination may be hard to discern (Plummer “Personal Interview”), my own fieldwork uncovered some tension regarding immigrants. Sudarshan Pyakurel, of BCCO, told me he only replied to me was because I mentioned Angela Plummer. Pyakurel told me that Fox news reporters have come to him posing as students, and he mentioned that people may be afraid of speaking to strangers fearing that these strangers are from the right-wing media. In a context of enormous forced migration and rising nativism, it is critical to challenge restrictionism, fear, and othering within local communities to nurture receptivity.

More recently, resettlement has had its ups and downs. Drawing from research among resettlement staff in Georgia before and after the 2016 presidential election, Darlene Xiomara Rodriguez et al. write that resettlement organizations “reported being ‘in a good position’ in

terms of federal funding in 2016 largely because they and RRAs nationwide were resettling a record level of refugees,” and they go on to note that “this ‘good position’ that caseworkers described” stems partly from the stability of refugee arrivals during the Obama and Bush presidencies “which had given RRAs a stable source of funding” (461). Things, however, changed with the Trump presidency. The significant cut in refugee admissions left agencies with less funding and “RRAs in Georgia were unprepared to operate with less funding and were forced to reduce the number of necessary staff members” (Rodriguez et al. 461). Strangely enough, the study revealed positive effects springing from the election period. Rodriguez et al. mention that, before and after the 2016 election, an increased national attention on refugees led to more support such as volunteering, donations, and advocacy (459).

Modern

Displaced individuals take various paths. They may remain in their country as internally displaced persons (IDPs) or flee to another country. Some claim asylum in their current country of residence or attempt to move to another country (Calais Writers 126). To gain refugee status, an individual registers with the UNHCR. Those with refugee status may apply for resettlement in a third country. Resettlement can take a long time (Ben Rawlence 186, 329), and the UNHCR writes that “[t]here were 20.7 million refugees of concern to UNHCR...at the end of 2020, but less than one per cent of refugees are resettled each year (“Resettlement”). Resettlement is not the only pathway towards security, but it is an important one available to too few individuals.

Some general statistics about global forced displacement and U.S. refugee resettlement will emphasize the importance of attending to immigration issues:

- The UNHCR reports that, by the end of 2020, 82.4 million people were forcibly displaced (“Global Trends” 2). In 2020, the U.S. population totaled 331,449,281 (“2020 Population and Housing State Data”). The equivalent of one-fourth of the U.S. population was displaced.
 - Of this 82.4 million, 48 million were internally displaced (“Global Trends” 2).
 - 26.4 million were refugees, 4.1 million were asylum seekers, and 3.9 million were Venezuelans displaced outside of Venezuela (“Global Trends” 2).
 - 73% of refugees and internationally displaced Venezuelans were living in a country near their country of origin (“Global Trends” 2).
 - 34,400 refugees were resettled, a significant decline from the previous year (“Global Trends” 3).
- The Refugee Processing Center reports the following figures for refugee admissions to the U.S.: 69,987 (2014), 69,933 (2015), 84,994 (2016), 53,716 (2017), 22,579 (2018), 30,000 (2019), 11,814 (2020), 11,411 (2021) (“Refugee Admissions Report as of March 31, 2022”).

Forced displacement is a problem of the first order. The displacement of a single family is morally problematic, but the sheer magnitude of displacement has astounding implications for the well-being of a significant portion of the earth’s population.

The U.S. federal government sends resettlement-approved refugees through nine partner agencies (one being Church World Service (CWS)) who then allocate these individuals

to local resettlement partners like CRIS. These local organizations do the groundwork of resettlement. First, resettlement staff search for housing pre-arrival and arrange temporary accommodation if permanent housing is unavailable. A staff member meets the new arrivals at the airport taking them to their accommodations. Refugees are provided multiple forms of support: a health screening, application for benefits and social security cards, and school enrollment for children. Refugees also receive orientation and job placement support. Resettlement organizations provide newly arrived refugees with the basic critical support they need during the early days of resettlement. Unfortunately, resettlement work cannot always be individualized or holistic.

Problem

Policy and funding shape resettlement service delivery. Additionally, challenges in housing, law, and employment present difficulties for newly arrived refugees and resettlement staff. The combination of an inadequate policy-funding model and real-world challenges makes resettlement more difficult and less responsive than it should be. To understand the context of resettlement and the need for my project, I will review issues in refugee policy, housing and fair housing law, and employment.

Policy

Resettlement policy and the funding structure present barriers to best practices. Ideally, flexible policy and funding would meet refugee- and staff-identified needs allowing for extended support when needed. The current funding model is limiting. Yearly, the president, “with the consultation of Congress,” decides on the upper limit of refugees to be received (Jessica Darrow 93). Darrow writes that the “[Department of State] provides local [resettlement

agencies] with per capita payments intended to defray resettlement costs incurred during the 90-day period” going on to explain that this system leads to fundability instability for organizations because “the flow of refugees to the United States has fluctuated over time, and the assignment of refugee clients to the local [organizations] is neither consistent nor reliable” (92). Though the funds are beneficial, the funding model limits resettlement activities to policy-defined practices.

Yet, policy does not necessarily reflect refugee needs. First, Odessa Benson and Annie Taccolini point out that policy can morph between creation and implementation (26). Policymakers are removed from the immediate context of resettlement, yet they decide the structure of that resettlement without being able to ensure their policy will do what they intend. Even if it were effective, a singular policy approach could not provide adequate flexibility to meet the diverse needs of refugee communities. Second, the specific nature of refugee policy is problematic. In U.S. resettlement policy, self-sufficiency transforms into placement in a job, and the number of refugees put in jobs is linked to ongoing contracts and funding from the government (Benson and Taccolini 29, 38-39). Job placement and other services may ignore a refugee’s needs or skills (Benson and Taccolini 41-43). Refugee communities are diverse, and they have the right to agency in their own lives. Instead of allowing staff to truly tailor support for individuals and families, the current funding structure ties resettlement activities to funded policy desires.

A single policy orientation cannot foresee the needs of every community, family, or individual. Benson and Taccolini assert that policy needs to “reconsider the strict time limits and one-size-fits-all approach to work placement” mentioning that their “informants”

suggested that a “first job does not equate self-sufficiency in the long-term sense intended by policy” (49). They add that “refugee-run, community-based organizations (or RCOs)” should be meaningfully involved in resettlement work and that self-sufficiency needs to expand, policy-wise, beyond its economic definition (Benson and Taccolini 49). Refugees should define their needs. The current system limits the ability of resettlement staff to provide refugee-focused resettlement; to offer extended support through federal funding; or to promote a holistic, healthy, self-paced transition for refugees.

Housing and Legislation

Physical, social, policy, and economic environments all have an impact. Urie Bronfenbrenner suggests an ecological model for understanding child development (37, 39-41). This model only applies to children, but the importance of environmental factors is undeniable. Studying the reactions of young immigrant men in the U.K. to location, Jessica Muir and Kenneth Gannon found negative experiences in institutional settings but positive experiences in a community center and in their own housing (279, 281-286). Host communities can impact, positively or negatively, the environment in which refugees are resettled.

The academic literature describes the importance of home in the context of displacement. Renos Papadopoulos has noted that “loss of home is the only condition that all refugees share, not trauma. Refugees are defined not as a group of people exhibiting any specific psychological condition but merely as people who have lost their homes” (7-9). Bree Akesson et al. discuss domicide as a human rights violation and argue for housing as a human right (378). Refugees also face concrete housing problems.

Resettlement staff must work within the limits of the housing situation and policy. First, interviews and resettlement meetings revealed that finding housing for new arrivals is challenging. Many new arrivals are placed in Airbnb's or hotels because permanent rental housing is unavailable. Meeting real or perceived rental requirements is an issue. Although refugees do have an official document—an I-94—this may not be recognized (Katie Williamson⁶). Landlords cannot run background checks, and refugees lack a credit history and social security upon arrival (Williamson, Plummer "Personal Interview", Andrew Niemynski). Apartment managers may wonder how refugees will pay the rent (Abdi). These things shrink the pool of available rentals. Second, Abdi expressed that housing prices are rising. Third, Plummer noted that people in Columbus are discussing housing but that CRIS' clients face added barriers such as language ability in calling code enforcement ("Personal Interview"). Cleanliness and getting timely maintenance can be an issue sometimes (Plummer, Abdi, Acharya, Mohamed Awad⁷). Securing and maintaining good housing is difficult.

The Fair Housing Act (FHA) also impacts the ability to secure housing. The FHA, part of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, was intended to rectify housing segregation ("Civil Rights Act of 1968," 1, 12; Robert Schwemm 578). The FHA makes it illegal to refuse "a dwelling to any person because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin" or "[t]o discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling...because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin" ("Civil Rights Act of 1968" 15). Unfortunately, the FHA discriminates against refugees by not considering that

⁶ Pseudonym

⁷ Pseudonym

its equality-for-all approach translates to inequality for some. Plummer pointed out that landlords may use Fair Housing as the reason for enforcing certain requirements for everyone because they fear being accused of discriminatory behavior although she “[thinks] that [the FHA] gets interpreted overly broad” (“Personal Interview”). There are simply some rental requirements that pre-arrival or newly arrived refugees cannot meet. The FHA excludes refugees from housing when it should support them as minorities. CRIS has been limited to a certain part of Columbus because of an inability to find landlords who will work with the resettlement agency in other parts of the city (Plummer “Personal Interview”). This refusal to collaborate, probably stemming from several issues, restricts the housing supply and limits choice which could ease some of the current housing problems.

The FHA, however, presents more than a structural barrier as it may be used to cover discrimination. Plummer noted that it can be hard to decide whether a refusal to rent to a refugee stems from discrimination against the refugee’s background or the landlord’s interpretation of fair housing law (“Personal Interview”), and Andrew Niemynski mentioned that rental requirements may be used to cover up discrimination against refugees. The very law intended to battle segregation has become a legal protection for exclusion as a structural barrier to housing and a potential cover for discrimination.

Employment

Employment, likewise, presents a barrier. In spite of foreign education, refugees and DV immigrants, often initially end up in low-wage jobs (Jennifer Erickson 98-99, Kasongo, Saidi Abdelkader⁸). Saidi Abdelkader, though university-educated, began in a pizza delivery position.

⁸Pseudonym

While low-wage work should not be stigmatized, it is problematic that the system pushes individuals into jobs they are overqualified for knowing that such work is stigmatized. Low-wage jobs likely impact the ability to afford housing which is doubly problematic given rising housing prices. This trend also risks stereotyping immigrants as uneducated, non-professional workers.

Housing and employment are only two sectors in which new arrivals may face difficulties, but they illustrate the challenges of starting life in a new place. Refugee policy and practice is misaligned, and policy cannot accurately predict what individuals and groups need. Odessa Benson has written that, although “the transfer of authority to local levels...had been envisioned as enabling policy implementation that was more efficient, flexible and tailored to local needs,” in fact, “policy outcomes run counter to the aims of effective service provision, and to commitments to facilitate [the] social and economic wellbeing of refugees” (2137). An immigrant support staff member told me that resettlement has been structured from the perspective of the resettlement agency not the perspective of the refugee (Pyakurel). Fundamentally, the U.S. needs a new policy-making philosophy and a more flexible system to better meet refugee needs. Creating a just policy structure, however, is massive in nature, and policy change alone cannot address all the barriers refugees face. Instead, I suggest a more pragmatic response to reduce gaps in the current system.

Project Foundation

My project handbook will help immigration advocates educate their local communities. Although teaching factual information is important, guiding communities to rethink their reactions to and perceptions of immigrants is more important. Those resistant to immigration are unlikely to be swayed by facts alone although facts may help individuals recognize the

suffering of forced migration. Equally important is the realization that attempts to help may be harmful if they stereotype or marginalize refugees. Above, I elucidate the pragmatic need for my project. The “Rationale” section below presents moral arguments for supporting resettlement while the “Approaching Engagement” section envisions the kind of community my project will help nurture. I end by discussing implementation and format.

Rationale

Why should we care? Otherness, belonging, and identity—these deeply sensitive topics cannot be ignored. I will avoid arguments like “Immigrants contribute to U.S. communities” because this reason (a) qualifies which immigrants deserve to enter the U.S. (see Maeve Higgins) and (b) bases immigration on how immigrants can serve host communities. Such reasoning does not engage questions of responsibility towards refugees stemming from our complicity in harmful U.S. actions. I also reject framing refugees as *needy*. Like everyone else, immigrants have strengths and weaknesses, skills and needs, backgrounds, histories, cultures, languages, values, and beliefs. I argue from two perspectives: Christian and moral.

Scripture

Not all my readers may associate with Christianity or organized religion, but treatment of the other is an important topic in the Bible. Christianity has played an important part in U.S. history and continues to be an influence in modern America. For my readers who do not identify with Christianity or organized religion, I encourage you to consider what your own traditions and values say about relating to outsiders and how such ideas can enrich our dialogues.

The Bible is concerned about how its people treat social outsiders. On the Sabbath, work was to cease so servants, animals, and foreigners could rest (*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*, Exodus 23:12). The Sabbath guards against the exploitation and exclusion of these groups who are outside of positions of privilege and power. Jesus taught the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus (John 3:1-21, 4:1-45). The first was a female outsider, the second, a male religious leader. Jesus engaged with those who wanted to engage with him. In one of his parables, Jesus links faith to action in the form of caring for the poor (Matthew 25:31-46). In fact, Jesus was notorious for stepping outside of community and social borders in his ministry.

Right-living involves considering the well-being of outsiders. Richard Beck writes that “Israel’s prophets” challenged “the priestly tradition of holiness, sacrifice, and purity” because it “was in some fundamental way, missing the point” going on to quote from Amos and Hosea (78) which present a God-pleasing life as one that pursues justice, righteousness, love/mercy, and knowing God instead of simply carrying out liturgical actions (Hosea 6:6, Amos 5:21-24). Timothy Keller notes that several Old Testament prophets linked a right relationship with God to caring for “the quartet of the vulnerable...the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, and the poor” (00:08:30-00:09:00), and he notes that concern for social justice is the mark of authentic faith, referencing James 2 (00:12:45-00:15:40). The Bible calls its people to care for marginalized communities, and the call to pursue justice, live righteously, and demonstrate love extends this commitment beyond geographic borders.

Complicity

American individuals and communities have obligations to refugees. David Vine et al. report, “Using the best available international data, this report conservatively estimates that at

least 37 million people have fled their homes in the eight most violent wars the U.S. military has launched or participated in since 2001” (1). Serena Parekh writes that “Western states should be seen as interconnected to the secondary harms experienced by refugees as they seek refuge and not solely as rescuers, rescuing refugees from a situation unconnected to them” (“Reframing the Refugee Crisis” 28). It is insufficient for Americans to see themselves as kindly helping refugees when, directly or indirectly, they have contributed to forced migration. James Dwyer calls individuals “to take responsibility for...those social structures that unfairly increase the probabilities that people will be induced to migrate for environmental reasons” (567). Dwyer references Iris Marion Young. Iris Young writes, “My responsibility is essentially shared with others because the harms are produced by many of us acting together within accepted institutions and practices, and because it is not possible for any of us to identify just what in our own actions results in which aspects of the injustice that particular individuals suffer” (110).

My readers have not started a war, supported a dictator, or forced a family from its home, but individuals can participate in a harmful status quo. For example, even well-intentioned individuals can support racist structures (Margaret Hagerman 53-55). Religious people are not free from complicity. Wendell Berry asserts that Christian complicity “in the cultural destruction and the economic exploitation of the primary peoples of the Western Hemisphere, as of traditional cultures around the world, is notorious” going on to write that Christians today may still ignore the impacts of “industrial economics” (336). This is painful to acknowledge.

Reflecting on our complicity in forced migration requires honesty, humility, and vulnerability. It also requires time. Recognizing the challenge of adopting a just lifestyle, Julie

Clawson advises her readers to start small and take “the time to really understand and get behind our actions” noting that “[s]ometimes insisting that the revolution be slow means that it will actually be *doable*” (italics original) (10-12). Despite the urgency of justice issues, like forced migration, change must be sustainable. This may mean taking slow, progressive steps towards justice. Crucially, complicity does not mean that individuals support racism, discrimination, or violence.

With the right to vote and voices to speak up, Americans can impact government and business choices. Sadly, American officials and companies have not always acted in ways that were life-giving for communities. For example, critics accused the Reagan administration for calling out Soviet abuses but having noncommunist allies “who committed similar sins” (Bon Tempo 190-191). David Pellow describes a case where waste ash from Philadelphia was transferred to Haiti, but a campaign eventually succeeded in repatriating that waste (107-123). Through votes, advocacy, and support of resettled families, individuals can care for displaced communities and pursue justice.

Where U.S. actions have led to forced migration or inaction has allowed human rights abuses to continue, resettlement is a form of justice. Parekh writes that “Western states have actively sought to contain refugee flows outside their own regions” later arguing that refugee camps largely cannot support human rights (*Refugees and Ethics* 40, 47, 50-51). Resettlement alone, however, does not ensure social justice if New Americans cannot access well-being in their new communities. Working for access to housing and employment, increasing support for resettlement, and educating communities about the complex humanity of refugees are all ways to further justice for New Americans. My project aims to do this.

Project Approach

With an understanding of American and Christian responsibilities towards refugees, I will now consider the philosophy with which I approach resettlement support. Finally, I will review implementation and project format.

Approaching Engagement

To nurture just relationships, host communities must be cautious of several problematic attitudes: ethnocentrism, harmful helping, and stereotyping. Salter McNeil writes that ethnocentrism “suggests the tendency to consciously or unconsciously view other groups or cultures from the viewpoint of one’s own culture and perspective, determining what’s ‘normal,’ ‘good or bad,’ ‘right or wrong’ based on standards that are established by and are most familiar to one’s specific ethnic group” (38). Everyone grows up within a cultural environment which shapes their paradigm. Host communities must approach intercultural interactions with humble teachability.⁹ Nurturing the open, safe, equal spaces needed for dialogue to flourish and inviting those considered *other* to speak is one way to combat ethnocentrism (See Salter McNeil 62-63).

How host communities perceive helping refugees also matters. Kathryn Choules holds that charity, which can be “patronizing and paternalistic,” does not question complicity in injustice (466-468). As argued above, American engagement with refugees moves beyond simple kindness into responsibility stemming from complicity. Choules believes that “respecting human rights has the potential to effect radical social change,” but she sees some problems with this approach (468-471). Arundhati Roy argues that “we begin to think of justice for the

⁹ Abandoning one’s cultural or moral background is not necessary. Salter McNeil notes that a strong personal identity is a prerequisite for reconciliation (62). Likewise, learning from other cultures does not require individuals to entirely abandon their identity.

rich and human rights for the poor.... Justice for Americans, human rights for Afghans and Iraqis” (qtd. in Choules 470). New Americans deserve justice as much as anyone else. As individuals offer support, they must do so in ways that do not degrade the humanity of those they help.

Immigrants are diverse. Rochelle Frounfelker et al. write about “the Somali Bantu experience of social, economic, and political marginalization,” asserting that “[r]efugee groups are not monolithic” (24). There are also multiple immigration pathways. Bernadette Ludwig, reporting on her study among the Liberian community of Staten Island, notes that, though Liberians entered the U.S. through various programs, they are collectively seen as refugees (8-9). It is important to not judge certain types of immigration. Dina Nayeri discusses the danger of forcing preconceived Western notions of acceptable reasons for immigration onto immigrants (194). Seth Holmes writes that “much of traditional migration studies assumes a dichotomy between voluntary, economic, and migrant...and forced, political, and refugee” going on to challenge the idea that economic migration is chosen (16-17, 25-26). Furthermore, the difference between refugees, undocumented immigrants, and asylum seekers is not as distinct as might be assumed. Refugee status—registration with the UNHCR—is attained after refugees flee across an international border. My third and fifth pamphlets discuss issues of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and victimization.

It is important to consider how immigrant and majority communities can best interact for everyone’s well-being. Alastair Ager and Alison Strang create a model of integration with 10 sub-categories (170). Their article, cited by others, may provide a basis to understand the various spheres in which New Americans need support. Melinda McPherson, however,

problematizes integration writing, “As a ‘middle road’ between the represented extremes of assimilationism and multiculturalism, integrationism has gained currency as a synonym for successful settlement” (547). McPherson continues that, despite the “progressive aspects of integrationism,... [it] remains concerned with the adaptation by outsiders to local norms” (547). There is no singular American identity, and, if there were, making this identity the default or standard would demonstrate ethnocentrism. For example, Simon Kasongo told me, “[M]y wife was scared because one morning we saw my next-door neighbor with a gun on the hip. You know we don’t use those stuff in Africa.... We didn’t like it.” Some things are not better in the U.S.

Majority-newcomer relationships should not be framed from the perspective of the newcomer alone changing. Systems that represent immigrants as in need of being fixed are problematic (McPherson 552-555). Listening to individuals from non-dominant social groups is one means of challenging ethnocentrism. Practicing tenants of intergroup contact theory¹⁰ may also provide room for American-born and immigrant communities to collaborate towards meaningful belonging in more equitable ways. Petra Keunkel, writing on collective leadership, asserts, “Indeed, they need to build committed teams of leaders within *and* across institutions.... They need to integrate different organizational cultures into joint initiatives and foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders” (*italics original*) (33). Intergroup relationships should involve this kind of collaborative approach. In supporting refugees, host communities

¹⁰ Jim Everett explains, “Gordon Allport (1954) proposed one of the most important social psychological events of the 20th century, suggesting that contact between members of different groups (under certain conditions) can work to reduce prejudice” (“Intergroup Contact Theory”).

must bring a mentality of inclusiveness and respect for the worth of others' contributions.¹¹

Without this mentality, engaging material support may produce some benefits but do so in ways that are insensitive or marginalizing.

Implementation

Implementation was not a part of the project itself, but I have solicited feedback from a handful of individuals and have received two reports. One organization expressed a desire to use my pamphlets. Given more time, I would extend this project to include soliciting feedback from immigrant support staff, immigrants, and apartment managers using this feedback to revise my project where warranted. By soliciting feedback, I would be embracing not only community participation and collaboration but would also be recognizing that, as an outsider, I am not the expert. This would introduce copowerment¹² to my project. Once the thesis is complete, I will share it with research contacts who might find it useful.

Format

This project focuses on educating local communities to create support for refugees, or other immigrant groups, using a series of customizable pamphlets. The Afghan crises of 2021 created interest in supporting Afghans coming to the U.S. although some were only interested in helping Afghans (Jeremy Hollon, Cyndi Germack). Education and engagement can help fill in policy-funding gaps and address other challenges. For example, educating rental industry

¹¹ Keunkel does not work within the immigration field, but her collaborative mentality is instructive. The concept of lament, presented by Emmanuel Katongole and Chris Rice, is particularly powerful in asking us to slow down and approach the pain of others (56-59). Collaboration and lament are two means of being with those who are *other* in life-giving ways.

¹² Copowerment is about a "mutual exchange through which both sides of a social equation are made stronger and more effective by the other" through "[e]ach side freely and confidently offer[ing] power...[to] the other in collaborative interdependence" (Forrest Inslee slides 22, 24). Copowerment involves acknowledging that "we cannot know all that we need to know to serve effectively in a cultural context not our own" (Inslee slide 23).

professionals could increase available housing combatting the limited supply available to refugees in Columbus. My first pamphlet provides basic information. The second offers suggestions for involvement. The third introduces refugee diversity and reevaluating one's perceptions. The fourth, housing-focused, targets information to a specific industry. The fifth offers suggestions for advocacy. These pamphlets help individuals and groups move from limited knowledge to support and advocacy.

The pamphlets themselves have not been contextualized¹³ to a specific culture because both CRIS and RIC serve multiple ethnic communities. My project can be adapted and contextualized to support specific refugee communities as well as other immigrant groups (e.g., DV immigrants, asylum seekers). They can also be adapted to educate individuals who interact with New Americans such as employers, school staff, or medical providers. Additionally, they can be utilized to create other media.¹⁴ Pamphlets, print or digital, can be passed to local leaders, faith leaders, other organizations, landlords and managers, and community members. This provides individuals the ability to educate and advocate without requiring extensive knowledge of resettlement issues.

This adaptability provides an opportunity for limited immigrant participation. Roger Hart, in his discussion of child participation, discusses various types of supposed and authentic participation (9-14). The limited participation I suggest is an attempt to introduce some form of

¹³ Contextualization is "[t]he practice of designing programs and processes with attention to the particular cultural characteristics and inherent resources of a given people, place and time" (Inslee slide 6).

¹⁴ Although pamphlets are a dated medium, the written format is an area of strength for me, whereas digital media are not. I present suggestions concerning modification and logistics in the handbook's "Implementation" section. Organizations can use my pamphlets as a basis to create digital media funded through a grant or the donation of services from a community member with expertise. Finally, older individuals may not use technology with ease (Andrew Niemynski), so low-tech options are still needed.

copowerment and more immigrant perspectives. Simon Kasongo related to me a frustrating housing experience:

[W]aking up in the morning; you see someone bringing a letter like ok “you have to fix this you have to do this you have to cut the grass,” and then, if you don’t do it, they come they do it, and they charge you.... At that time, imagine you been working at night. Coming back in the morning just to take shower, eat a little and then go back to work again. I was working 16 hours a day. At the same time, they want you to cut the grass.... It was not easy. It was a kind of relief when we left there.

Kasongo’s memory highlights how not talking to immigrants can be harmful. Bryant Myers writes, “The essence of empowerment is that there is some kind of process of social change directed by the people themselves by which people—as individuals and groups—are able to shape their own lives in ways that they choose” (237). Increasing immigrant participation could include asking refugees to edit educational materials for sensitivity and authenticity as well as including their input for what areas of content need covered and what communities in the local context could benefit from education.

Community-based change is critical because refugees need a welcoming supportive environment in which to thrive. UNICEF reviews one successful intervention in the Afar region to reduce female genital mutilation (FGM) which involved significant local participation, planned events, informal conversations about FGM, facilitators drawn from diverse parts of the community, and religious leaders who explained that Islam does not call for FGM (“Dynamics of Social Change” 27, 29). The community-based approach has been used outside of the FGM context. World Vision’s Channels of Hope trainings educate faith leaders on sensitive issues

using an approach that helps leaders engage their own holy texts on these issues; leaders are prepared to become change agents for vulnerable populations in their own communities (2-3). Concerning the role of faith in addressing harms against children, Selina Palm and Carola Eyber note, “Secular agencies acknowledge the role of faith leaders as community gatekeepers with access capital and social capital in bringing resources to the table” (2). Leaders can help nurture change, so community education and engagement should include local leaders and engage faith groups. My project encourages individuals to consider their beliefs and assumptions about foreigners. In doing so, it will help communities create healthy environments and relationships for resettled refugees.

Conclusion

Effective resettlement is a multifaceted, holistic effort requiring community support to build upon government structures. Resettlement needs to be responsive, holistic, sensitive, and case-driven. Current structures prevent it from being so, and the very nature of resettlement—e.g., securing housing and job placement—is contingent on the host community. Community engagement and participation is thus not only a stop-gap measure for inflexible policy and limited, unstable funding but also a fundamental element of holistic resettlement. This thesis covered my research into resettlement and immigration; recent immigration history; modern refugee resettlement; and barriers facing refugees in the areas of policy, housing, and employment. In the last section, I considered the spiritual and moral rationales for my project before covering engagement attitudes, implementation, and format. With these topics in mind, my readers are now prepared to review my project in Appendix A.

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Appendix A: Project

New Americans:

A Handbook for Community Engagement and Education in Support of Refugees

Project Proposal

Stefanie Stoops

May 2022

Introduction¹⁵

Emma Lazarus writes, “Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore” (“The New Colossus”). The U.S. has a long history of receiving immigrants although these individuals and families have not always been well treated. All individuals deserve basic human rights and a dignified life. Despite recent anti-immigrant rhetoric, the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the evacuation of a large number of Afghans have led to interest in helping Afghan refugees. This is an opportunity to urge American-born¹⁶ communities to rethink their attitudes towards immigrants and encourage their engagement in support of such communities.¹⁷

While it may be easy to think of resettlement¹⁸ as the end of a refugee’s journey, it is really only the beginning of the next step. Resettled refugees may face a number of challenges including English acquisition, employment, access to quality housing, mental health issues, and separation from loved ones. Resettlement in the U.S. continues long after the end of the official 90-day period as individuals and families work to make the U.S. their new home. Effective resettlement would acknowledge the diverse backgrounds and experiences of refugees and

¹⁵ Any names changed to protect privacy are noted with an asterisk (*) in the project proposal section.

¹⁶ This project uses *American-born* to designate communities who have a long history in the U.S. and are, therefore, either white/European or African American as opposed to foreign-born communities. However, this project also recognizes that the U.S. has a long history of immigration and ethnic diversity, including indigenous communities, and that the way ethnic minorities are viewed changes over time. It also recognizes that the children of immigrants may be American-born.

¹⁷ Frustratingly, both Jeremy Hollon, of Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS), and Cyndi Germack, of Jewish Family Services of Delaware, have come across individuals who are interested in helping Afghans specifically but not other refugee populations. Engaging community support for broader resettlement and immigration needs to take this into account. While the Afghan crises may be an opportunity to engage broader community support, it is critical to engage community members in reflecting about larger immigration contexts.

¹⁸ See the immigration vocabulary list under “Additional Materials.”

support families accordingly. Unfortunately, U.S. resettlement policy focuses on a narrow definition of self-sufficiency limited to being employed by the 90th day.

In order to provide refugees resettled in Columbus with more support, Community Refugee and Immigration Services needs to provide the wider Columbus community with pathways to engagement through education and practical means for involvement. By forging connections with individuals, groups, organizations, and local government, CRIS can engage community resources in support of immigrant families who need extended support in specific areas. Based on archival research and fieldwork with immigrants and CRIS, this project will provide a series of educational pamphlets to (1) help communities better understand refugees and resettlement, (2) provide communities with pragmatic ways to support New American families, (3) urge communities to reflect on their own biases and assumptions about immigrants, (4) educate rental managers and landlords about renting to refugees, and (5) support passionate individuals to engage their own networks in support of resettled refugees. These pamphlets provide a model that can be customized by other resettlement agencies or immigrant support organizations to support engagement in their own contexts. This project handbook will discuss initial engagement; present pamphlet templates, a pamphlet evaluation form, and a short immigration vocabulary list; and offer ideas for implementation and modification.

Resettlement

The self-sufficiency policy of U.S. resettlement becomes muddled in implementation through the diminishment of self-sufficiency to initial job placement within policy time constraints and the deindividualization of services which ignores individual circumstances

(Odessa Benson & Annie Taccolini 26, 36, 38-43). The lack of attention to refugee voices in providing services is particularly troubling. Bryant Myers points out the wisdom of listening to local or community wisdom and knowledge and further notes that dismissing such knowledge only further marginalizes communities by implicitly telling them they have nothing to contribute (231-233). Current resettlement policy does not prioritize refugee voices.¹⁹

Refugee resettlement staff face a number of barriers to providing holistic, individualized services. The unreliable structure of resettlement funding, capacity issues, policy's focus on quick employment, government requirements, and eligibility rules impact services and can negatively affect refugees and the organization's relationship to refugee communities (Jessica Darrow, "The (Re)construction" 91-93, 107-108, 111-115; Jessica Darrow, "Administrative Indentureship" 36-40; Dan Trudeau 2808-2809, 2811-2812). This is reflected in the field. Angela Plummer, of Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS), speaking of addressing housing issues clients face, stated, "There are legal processes available, but they're not practical for someone [the client] to do without help, and we don't have funding currently to help bridge that gap" ("Personal Interview"). She pointed out, "[W]hat we really need is focusing on the bigger picture issue," but she also discussed how CRIS is only funded to find housing for new arrivals (Plummer "Personal Interview"). Policy, funding, and capacity handicap resettlement organizations from providing the length or diversity of support needed, such as helping clients with housing after initial placement.

Other barriers make quality service provision difficult. Plummer noted, "Typically they want to live with others who speak the same language..., but sometimes it's very difficult to find

¹⁹ See Jessica Darrow "Administrative Indentureship."

apartments in those areas because it's kind of like that's where we've been stuck on this northeast side. That's the place where we can find landlords willing to work with us" ("Personal Interview"). Renting in other sectors of the city would increase the housing supply, but this requires property owners willing to work with the resettlement agency. Unfortunately, Fair Housing Law presents another barrier (Plummer "Personal Interview"). Apartment management can also be problematic. Abdi, of CRIS, noted that high management turnover at apartment complexes means that case managers have to educate new managers about resettlement to engage apartments for new arrivals.²⁰ Refugee resettlement desperately needs policy change that prioritizes customization of service delivery. Community education and engagement are needed to both fill the gap left by inadequate policy and increase the number of individuals willing to actively participate in welcoming refugees.

Initial Engagement

To educate communities about refugees, resettlement organizations first need to engage with the community. This project proposes a process of relationship building where initial engagement provides opportunities for education which spur community members to active personal, financial, business, or advocacy engagement; engagement can thus be seen as ongoing, but initial engagement is necessary before education can commence. CRIS already does engagement work. The following will suggest avenues for engagement that resettlement agencies should consider.

²⁰ This research has focused primarily on housing issues although refugees and immigrants certainly face other barriers including non-recognition of foreign education (Simon Kasongo,* Saidi Abdelkader*) and transportation (Abdi), among other things.

Internet Engagement

Using a website as a landing page can provide information and a way to connect to volunteering opportunities. Jeremy Hollon, who works with youth at CRIS, noted that the CRIS website was recently redesigned and is now periodically updated. He pointed out the strength of having basic pamphlet information, which does not become quickly outdated, with further and more specific information on the website, which would be the information medium receiving updates (Jeremy Hollon). CRIS has a webpage with specific suggestions for engaging in advocacy (“Advocacy”) and another page with links to further resources (“Stay Informed”).²¹ Many people today search for information online, and the coronavirus pandemic has only heightened the importance of the internet, so an attractive, intuitive website with the right amount of up-to-date information is a resource.

Social media is now an important aspect of marketing. Thomas Friedman discusses how—through the cloud, “*the power of machines*,” and “*the power of flows*”—one person is now able to impact many others (Friedman’s italics) (85-87). He writes, “one person can educate millions with an Internet learning platform (Friedman 87). Social media is powerful although it requires knowledge to be used successfully. CRIS has Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts. Social media provides another outreach channel, one which may be better suited to reaching younger generations.

²¹ From a quick review of the CRIS website, there does not seem to be information addressing the need for self-reflection of one’s perceptions of refugees. The website also does not seem to have a pamphlet targeted at landlords under the “Stay Informed” page of the website although there is a housing specific email.

Print Material Engagement

In addition to digital formats, pamphlets can be printed and distributed. Andrew Niemynski, who works in resettlement, noted that older landlords may not be tech savvy. CRIS has a two-page flyer with introductory information about their work supporting refugees and immigrants although this is not tailored towards landlords. Print and digital pamphlets can be passed on to civic, nonprofit, and government partners; refugee and American-born communities; or others to pass on to their own contacts. If properly targeted, print materials can reach those who do little on the internet.

Resettlement-Community Engagement

Staff or volunteer interactions with community members can provide further opportunities for engagement. Staff and volunteers can act as advocates and educators by pointing interested contacts to internet platforms or by handing out print materials and passing along digital materials in addition to having conversations. Building relationships with community leaders and government officials is one means of outreach because they know individuals who own property (Andrew Niemynski, Elena Korbut). Given the current capacity limitations of resettlement staff, this relational advocacy is a role that may be better delegated to volunteers, but staff may have more government contacts. However, staff contacts can be engaged to contact their own connections broadening the circle of engagement. Additionally, CRIS has several educational trainings: “Good Neighbor Training,” training for employers, speakers, and training about the experience of resettlement (“CRIS Training”).

Pamphlets

This section will provide five pamphlet templates: “Introduction to Refugees,” “Getting Involved,” “Immigrants and Perceptions,” “Housing,” and “Expanding Your Impact.” These pamphlets are presented as near-completed templates which CRIS or other organizations supporting refugees and immigrants may modify to meet their specific needs.

Pamphlet 1: Introduction to Refugees

Introduction to Refugees

Who is a Refugee?

You've probably heard the term *refugee* but may not realize it has more than one definition. A refugee is someone who has fled her/his home country. Article 1 of the "1951 Refugee Convention" provides an important definition (see "The 1951 Refugee Convention"), but even this definition encompasses a number of communities, so it's important to limit assumptions and recognize that diversity exists.

Refugees come from different countries, tribes, ethnicities, and religions.

Not all immigrants are refugees, and not all those who leave difficult home country conditions come to the U.S. under the refugee program. Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) serves multiple communities, including refugees being resettled in the U.S. USTogether serves refugees.

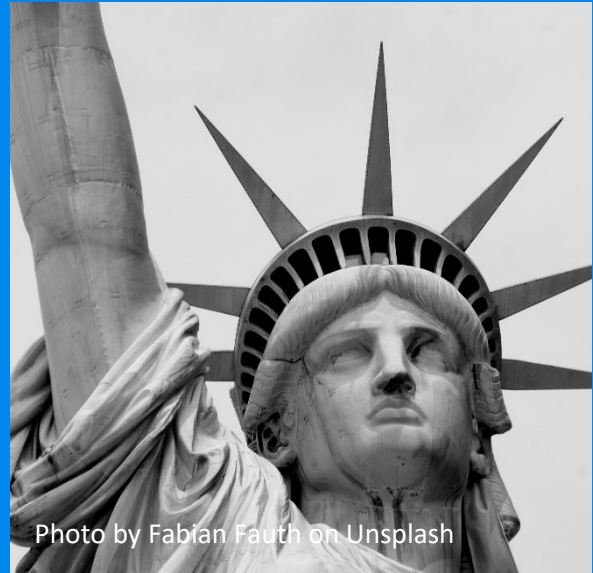


Photo by Fabian Fauth on Unsplash

About Resettlement

Individuals and families granted resettlement in the U.S. are assigned to one of nine national organizations partnering with the federal government. These national organizations assign incoming refugees to their local partner

organizations such as CRIS and USTogether. It is these local resettlement organizations who do the actual work of resettlement. One of the resettlement agency's earliest tasks is to start looking for housing before the New American family or individual arrives. Resettlement agencies meet new arrivals at the airport, enroll them in English classes, apply for benefits, enroll children in school, and help them find jobs.



Photo by Jason Leung on Unsplash

Our City

Columbus has a history of refugee resettlement. We have Bhutanese, Somali, Congolese, and Afghan communities, among others. CRIS also works with non-refugee populations. Unfortunately, resettlement organizations can't do everything which is why we need your help.

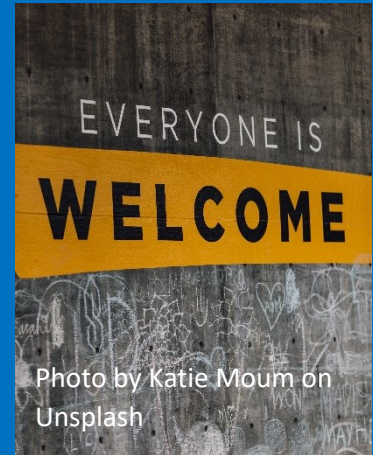


Photo by Katie Moun on Unsplash

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Pamphlet 2: Getting Involved

Getting Involved

In the Community

If you're looking for ways to support refugees or immigrants, there are many things you can do, including being a good neighbor:

- Learn about your new neighbor's country, language, or culture from reliable sources.
- Welcome your new neighbors. They may live next to you, work with you, or send their children to the schools your children attend. Immigrants and refugees aren't always welcomed, so a kind, respectful welcome matters.
- Build relationships with your new neighbors. This takes time, and it's important to respect their boundaries. Offer your help if you would do so to another person, but don't assume that your neighbors need help simply because they're refugees or immigrants.

Your new neighbors may have different beliefs, holidays, languages, foods, or a different religion. Keep an open mind. It's easy to make assumptions about or stereotype people you don't know. Getting to know someone from a different culture can be highly rewarding. Just because someone looks foreign doesn't mean he is, and, even if he is, remember he's a person just like you.

Through a Resettlement Agency

Your local resettlement agency or refugee-run community organization can provide you with up-to-date needs. Here are a few:

- **Housing:** Both temporary and permanent housing are currently major needs. If you have available housing, contact Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) to hear about current needs.
- **Welcome Teams:** Teams support new families in areas like language practice or transportation for 6 months.
- **Gift Cards:** Refugees receive a government grant upon arrival to pay for early expenses, but extra assistance is beneficial.



Photo by Kyle Glenn on Unsplash

- **Conversation Partner:** While some New Americans have a good command of English, others don't. Imagine living in a place where you didn't speak the same language as your boss, your landlord, or your child's teacher. You can help a new arrival build a foundational skill for life in this country. You may also help her establish ties in the community.

As a Group

If you have a group—friends, co-workers, a religious group, etcetera—contact a resettlement agency or other immigrant support organization for information about group opportunities. Consider providing a larger donation to a resettlement agency, or think about becoming a welcome team or part of a welcome team.

For More Information

There are a number of good resources for learning about other cultures. Look for organizations or authors with experience and credentials. Works by refugee authors are insightful, but remember that no single work reflects an entire population. Every author has biases. Your local library, your university library, or a local refugee-run cultural organization are good places to start.

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BHUTANESE COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL OHIO
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Pamphlet 3: Immigrants and Perceptions

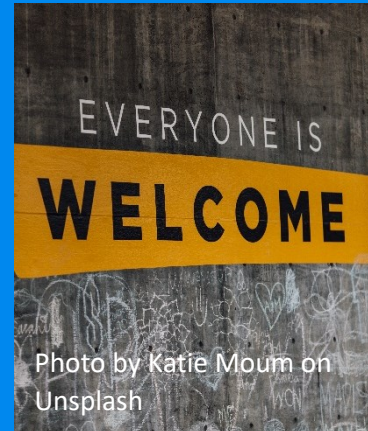
Immigrants and Perceptions

Types of Immigration

There are different ways that and different reasons why people migrate. Unfortunately, not all forms of immigration are seen the same, and immigration can meet negative reactions.

Refugees

Individuals who flee their country of origin may apply for refugee status through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) after which they may apply for resettlement in a third country. The UNHCR specifically defines a refugee as a person who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (“The 1951 Refugee Convention” Article 1, Section A, Subsection 2).



Asylum Seekers

Some individuals fleeing their countries ask for asylum in the country to which they fled or another country beyond this. They seek the legal right to remain in the country in which they are currently living. Those who are asking for asylum status are called asylum seekers and those who are granted asylum are called asylees. Because they do not have official status, like refugees, asylum seekers are more vulnerable.

Diversity Visa Lottery

Some come to the U.S. through the diversity visa (DV) lottery in which certain countries are given a quota of visas. Individuals can apply, and, if selected, they have a chance at an interview. Those who pass the interview are allowed to come to the U.S. and are granted a green card. Unlike refugees, DV lottery immigrants do not receive any government support.

Undocumented Migration

Some individuals remain in the country they have crossed into without documentation. While political refugees are given rights because they were forced to migrate, economic immigrants are seen as choosing to migrate, yet those fleeing economic problems have not had a choice in the economic policies that pushed them to migrate (Seth Holmes 16-17, 25-26).



Photo by Fabian Fauth on

Finally, terms can be difficult. *Refugee* can refer to individuals who have fled their home, even if they do not have UNHCR protection. Furthermore, refugees are undocumented before they apply for refugee status. Many individuals have fled their homes but do not have refugee status because they are internally displaced. Additionally, individuals in the U.S. without documentation may have come for various reasons.

Diversity

Origin

Refugees and immigrants are diverse. While you may be familiar with people fleeing from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Somalia, or Syria, refugees have come from many countries. Don't make assumptions about someone's birth, immigration, citizenship status, language, culture, tribe, or religion. Importantly, populations experience divisions and variations to a lesser or greater extent. Immigrants from the same country, ethnic group, or religion are not identical.

Religion

Religions display diversity of practice. Just as there are Christian denominations, there are a variety of Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu "denominations," and different individuals may practice their religion differently. It is potentially inaccurate to apply terms like *conservative* or *liberal* to other cultural-religious contexts because these terms carry meaning in American society that may or may not be an accurate description of other societies.

Trauma

Renos Papadopoulos writes, “[L]oss of home is the only condition that all refugees share, not trauma” (5-9). Referencing some of his earlier work, Papadopoulos points out that multiple stages of the refugee’s journey can be traumatic, including resettlement (Cited in Renos Papadopoulos). Becoming a refugee and starting life over in a new country can be traumatic, but not every refugee is traumatized.



Assumptions

Immigration is a touchy topic in America, particularly undocumented immigration. Muslim immigration can also cause fear. It’s easy to have biases without even realizing it. The media, even when pro-immigrant, can present harmful portrayals if it stereotypes or excludes groups of immigrants (Anahí Viladrich 1448-1449, Ina Seethaler 5-12). Consider your own thoughts and feelings concerning refugees and other immigrants. Use this as an opportunity to become aware of your worldview and to broaden the scope of that vision.

Resources

There are a number of good resources about immigration, refugees, migration, and race. Approach your reading with an open but critical mind aware of the author’s background. Our 5th Pamphlet “Expanding Your Impact” has a list of good resources.

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Housing

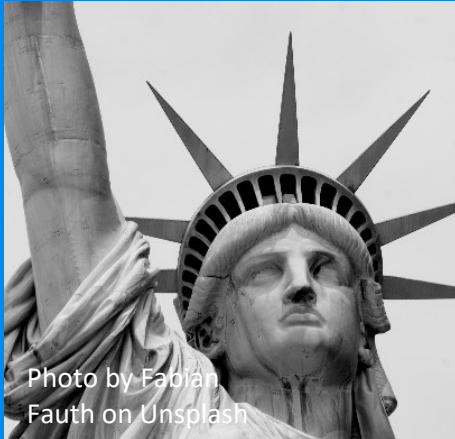


Photo by Fabian Fauth on Unsplash

Who is a Refugee?

A refugee is someone who has fled her/his home country. Refugees resettled in the U.S. come through the federal government and have official refugee status through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Organizations like Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) and USTogether do the actual work of resettlement.

Rental Requirements

Documents

- Abdi, of CRIS, notes that refugees have a government identification document and that case managers will apply for their social security.
- Most refugees apply for social security after arrival.

Support

- All refugees receive a one-time government grant to cover early costs including initial rent payments.
- CRIS provides refugees support through transportation to a health screening, application for benefits, provision of cultural orientation, enrollment in English classes, and job search support.

Renting to Refugees

Interaction

Moving to a new country can be difficult for anyone regardless of education or citizenship status. It takes time to start life over in a new place, but new arrivals can go on to thrive. Abdi notes that CRIS does not bring refugees from the airport and abandon them.

Supporting Your Tenants

You can do several things to support your tenants and cultivate a good

relationship:

- Be proactive. Ask your new tenants if they have any questions about the apartment or living in the complex. Refugees receive orientation but have a lot on their plates. There may be things your new tenants simply don't know about housing in America (Jhuma Acharya, Simon Kasongo*). Refugees aren't incapable or unintelligent; things may just have been different where they came from.
- Assume innocence: if you have an issue with a tenant, ask him to explain what happened and why. The problem might have been unintentional.

Our goal is to help our clients successfully settle, and we understand that this takes time and support. CRIS wants to develop long-term relationships with people like you that are based on understanding and communication.

If you're hesitant about renting to refugees, try taking a single individual or family. If you have a problem, we really want to know about it so we can help you work through it, and we'd love to answer your questions about renting to refugees.

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*Pseudonym

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Pamphlet 5: Expanding Your Impact

Expanding Your Impact

Rethink Your Own Biases

So, why should you become an advocate? You have relatives, friends, co-workers, co-religionists, and neighbors that Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS) doesn't have personal contact to. Your passion for supporting immigration can be a strong argument. You can use your knowledge and experiences to support refugee resettlement and other areas of immigration.

Unconscious Assumptions

Everyone has preconceptions that are invisible without serious self-reflection. Perception is a knife. It can harm, or it can help. Discussing how journalism frames issues through research of New York Times articles, Anahí Viladrich writes, "Rather than a language of human rights, journalistic accounts tend to express compassion toward particular groups of vulnerable individuals (e.g., the terminally ill, accident victims, and the elderly)," and she continues, "[t]he framing of the right to health care as 'selective inclusion,'...prioritizes certain groups among the undocumented as eligible for health care and social benefits in the United States" (1448-1449). Even when you support something, your perception can be blinkered. Ina Seethaler discusses how television characterizes foreigners stereotypically although it sometimes challenges stereotypes (5-12).

It's important to engage in self-reflection, thinking about *how* you think. Here are some starters:

- Do you think refugees need help?
- Do you think refugees will always need help?
- Do you think all refugees are the same?
- Do you think refugees have the same experiences?
- Do you think refugees have anything to contribute?
- Do you think all refugees are traumatized?
- Do you think refugees should assimilate into American culture?



Photo by Katie Moum on Unsplash

Not all these questions should be answered with a *no*. Even if you know a lot about refugees and welcome them, remember that you may still hold harmful yet unexamined ideas. Self-reflection can be intimidating and unsettling, so give yourself time, and tell yourself that it's ok to realize you were wrong.

Start the Conversation

Share Your Own Experiences

Once you've had time to begin self-reflection, engage with others. Your own cross-cultural experiences can be a tool. If you've lived, worked, or studied long-term in a culture significantly different than your own, you understand the challenge of starting life in a new and different place. You can use such experiences, even small ones, to bring a human element to the conversation. Sharing these experiences may be important if your friends have not had significant contact with foreigners. It's easy to reduce people to statistics and to forget the human individuals, voices, and stories.

Dialogue About Assumptions

After you've laid the groundwork, you may have the opportunity to challenge your contact to reflect on her own assumptions. This can be tricky ground. If you've done some self-reflection of your own, you'll understand how hard it is to realize you're wrong. Sharing your own experiences of self-reflection can show others that this kind of hard self-work is alright. Frame this self-work as a search for truth within an environment of love. Critical reflection cannot occur where people do not feel emotionally safe.

Invite Participation

If your contacts are open to getting involved and have a positive view of refugees, you can invite participation. A first, easy step might be to donate, but encourage them to keep going. Money is helpful, but CRIS needs volunteers willing to donate their time and skills. If you feel comfortable doing so, you might also introduce your contact to a refugee friend. Keep a couple of things in mind.

- This should be a positive experience for



Photo by Kyle Glenn on Unsplash



Photo by Jason Leung on
Unsplash

both your friends.

- Ask your refugee friend for his permission beforehand.
- Let your refugee friend decide whether he shares his story or not. (Dina Nayeri writes extensively about the problem of forcing displaced persons to retell their stories and to do so in ways that fit the Western conception of an acceptable refugee story.)

Personal connections to people from different cultures, countries, and religions can be challenging, but they can also be rewarding. These relationships must be based on mutual respect and a willingness to learn. You do not need to endorse everything the other person believes, but you should approach conversations understanding

that your friend holds tightly certain ideas, beliefs, and practices just as you do. While you may stand resolute on some issues and discover that other issues are not that important, you may find that you learn something from another cultural value or religion, even if you don't embrace the whole.

Engage Your Faith Group

Get your co-religionists and religious leaders excited about welcoming immigrants. Tell them why it's important to you to support immigrants. Getting your leaders on board will help you get other co-religionists on board. Encourage everyone you recruit to advocate to their contacts. Start a conversation within your religious group about what your holy books and religion say about foreigners. Sometimes people believe that their religion supports a certain belief or practice when it may not. This can be a potentially challenging process especially if you are doing this with other people. You may feel that you are challenging what is right or that you are challenging authority. However, just because you ask questions does not mean that you are walking away from your religion. Seek for the truth, and encourage others to do the same.

Other Groups

You may feel this isn't relevant to you because you are not religious or

do not practice your religion in a group setting, but you can apply the information above within a non-religious framework. Advocate to friend groups, family, co-workers, neighborhood groups, or parent groups. Think about whether your beliefs and values support immigrants, and ask others to do so as well.

Resources for Your Networks

Finally, provide your contacts with resources:

- Our Pamphlets
- Articles, books, or documentaries that have been personally impactful to you
- Other resources:
 - *White Kids* by Margaret Hagerman
 - *How to be an AntiRacist* by Ibram X Kendi
 - *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* by Seth Holmes
 - *The Ungrateful Refugee* by Dina Nayeri
 - *The Displaced* by Viet Thanh Nguyen
 - *Race-in Fargo* by Jennifer Erickson
 - *An Immigrant's Manifesto* by Suketu Mehta
 - *I Was Told Me To Come Alone* by Souad Mekhennet

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GET INVOLVED



- www.crisohio.org/
- www.crisohio.org/volunteer



**Riverview
International Center**

- <https://www.riverviewinternationalcenter.org/>



US TOGETHER

- www.ustogether.us/columbus-office



BHUTANESE COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL OHIO
मध्य ओहायो भुटानी समुदाय

- www.bccoh.org/

Additional Materials

The following section will provide a short evaluation form for organizations to gage the effectiveness of the pamphlets and gather information about how individuals are learning about the organization. A short non-exhaustive vocabulary list of immigration terms is included for use with these pamphlets and with this project. These terms will also be helpful in understanding and discussing immigration issues beyond this project.

Pamphlet Evaluation

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Why are you contacting our organization?

2. How did you hear about us?

3. Have you seen any of our educational pamphlets (“Introduction to Refugees,” “Getting Involved,” “Immigrants and Perceptions,” “Housing,” or “Expanding Your Impact”)?

4. How can we improve our pamphlets or other outreach materials?

Immigration Terms

assimilation: entirely assuming a new culture leaving behind one's culture of birth

asylee: a person who has been granted asylum

asylum seeker: a person who seeks to be settled in the country to which he/she has fled and is currently living in

case manager: a staff resettlement member who provides frontline support to the refugee

country of origin: an immigrant's country of birth (however, some people are born in transit, such as in a refugee camp)

emigrate: to move from one's home country

I-94: the official document refugees possess when they first arrive in the U.S.

illegal alien/illegal immigrant: an undocumented immigrant, but this term is problematic and should not be used

immigrate: to move to another country

integration: becoming part of the community without entirely losing one's own culture

internally displaced person (IDP): a person who has fled her/his home but remains in her/his country of origin

refugee: broadly a person who has fled his/her home country; specifically, an individual who has registered with the UNHCR.

resettlement: the process of moving to a third country to settle permanently

resettlement organization/agency: an organization that partners with one of nine large organizations working with the federal government to resettle refugees; resettlement agencies do the actual work of resettling refugees in communities

undocumented: the state of not having documentation and not applying for asylum or having had one's asylum request denied

the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): the UN agency that handles refugees and through which refugees register to achieve official refugee status

Implementation

This section will deal with issues surrounding implementation. It will discuss targeting and distribution channels, reinforce the importance of relationships, and offer some suggestions about logistics. It will also provide some ideas to help other organizations modify the pamphlets for their own contexts.

Targeting

Each of these pamphlets is targeted at a slightly different audience and has a different purpose. Pamphlet 1 “Introduction to Refugees” provides basic information and is meant to spark interest. It is meant for those who know little to nothing about refugees or to provide a factual foundation. Pamphlet 2 “Getting Involved” offers practical ways for individual, group, informal, and formal involvement. It can be used after the pamphlet “Introduction to Refugees” or for anyone who would like to actively support refugees. Pamphlet 3 “Immigrants and Perceptions” provides further information on immigration, biases, and immigrant diversity. It is meant for those interested in self-reflection and is a good tool for those who already have some immigration knowledge or who have read the pamphlet “Introduction to Refugees.” Pamphlet 4 “Housing” is targeted to managers, landlords, and property management company employees and owners. It answers basic questions about renting to newly arrived refugees. Pamphlet 5 “Expanding Your Impact” helps people engage their own networks in support of refugees. Pamphlets 1, 2, 3, and 5 form a series to take people from initial contact and interest through education and engagement to advocacy within personal networks. Pamphlet 4 is unique in that it focuses on housing.

Distribution

These materials can be distributed to community members in both printed and digital formats. They can be distributed through a variety of channels such as a website, email, social media, personal contacts, professional contacts, faith groups, employers, managers, landlords, schools, medical offices, or government offices. Anyone who serves or comes into contact with refugees is a potential reader, and readers can become advocates by passing information along. Provided with pamphlets and solid information on the website to point people to, a landlord who had a great experience renting to refugees could reach out to her personal contacts (Hollon). Information helping people better understand the diversity of immigrants, “how are we describing this population,” and terms to avoid using could be useful “for educators, for employers, for landlords” or could be given “to the City of Columbus, to mayoral candidates, to superintendents of districts” (Hollon). Although resettlement staff will form the first line of educators and advocates, they are not the only agents for change.

Pamphlets should be posted to the website allowing visitors easy access to information. For CRIS, the pamphlets can be posted as PDFs under the “About,” “Services,” “Get Involved,” or “Resources” sections of the website. Digital pamphlets can be emailed to both information seekers and partner advocates for further dispersal. Contact information on pamphlets should be given in the format of general email accounts, as opposed to individual accounts, so that the material does not become out of date (Hollon), and CRIS has a generic volunteer email where volunteer requests are routed. Videos are popular, so organizations might consider using these pamphlets and their own contextual information to create videos to augment digital or print material. This material could also be used as a starting point to create a webinar.

Relationships

Building relationships is critical. Pamphlets 1 and 2 are a resource to send to people initially, but it is important to follow up this print/digital information with human contact where possible. Niemynski noted that a one-page overview and quick video for further information might be useful, but he also pointed out that most landlord relationships happen through the phone or in-person. Cyndi Germack, of Jewish Family Services of Delaware, has two one-page pamphlets to send to prospective landlords educating them about renting to refugees.²² Ultimately, these pamphlets are not meant to entirely replace staff-community interactions. Instead, they are meant to make education easier and more grassroots in nature.

Logistics

Outreach requires time and financial resources which are in short supply for resettlement staff. Modifying the pamphlets and printing them are two costs. Depending on the local context, more modification may be necessary, and some organizations may wish to use their branding or color scheme. It may be possible to find grant funding for an outreach staff position who would take on marketing tasks. Organizations might also ask marketing companies or individuals with marketing/graphic design skills to donate their time and the cost of production to finish the above pamphlets. The cost of producing print materials could come out of operational or marketing budgets, if available, or organizations could ask for community donations to cover printing costs. The prevalence of the internet now means that there are a number of ways to distribute material that no longer require paper and ink, thus cutting down

²² A video format would probably be more effective than pamphlets, but the author does not have the video production skills to produce a professional video project. Further, not all individuals use the internet with ease, so there may still be a need for print materials.

on costs. Following up on information inquiries, collating data, and reviewing and reporting on data could also be delegated to volunteers.

It may take CRIS two months²³ to review and finish these pamphlets. An evaluation should occur between three and six months after initial distribution or posting, but data collection should begin immediately. Evaluation will center around gaging how many individuals or groups contact CRIS because of the pamphlets as well as how impactful the pamphlets are and how they could be improved. To ensure an accurate view, staff and volunteers need to consistently ask these questions. A short survey can facilitate this process and is included above under the “Additional Materials” section.

Other Contexts

While these pamphlets have been designed from the perspective of a particular organization (CRIS), other organizations and agencies can modify and use them. First, organizations should consider their own connections to other NGOs, refugee-run organizations, local political leadership, government agencies, faith groups, and community groups. Organizations should discover what personal or professional connections their staff have. Joseph Landis, of Church World Service Lancaster, pointed out that organizations should consider whether they have the capacity and procedures in place to handle any increased inquiries before they publish educational and engagement material, and they should ask this same question of any partners whose contact information they wish to include in their materials. Second, organizations should think about organizational and communal resources, tailoring suggestions for engagement to the local context.

²³ This is a guess and should be modified as needed.

Third, applying principles of community knowledge and participation, pamphlets must take into consideration the needs that refugees or immigrants identify and which the organization is unable to meet. Getting feedback on the content and format of the pamphlets from refugees or immigrants before circulation would ensure that the material is an authentic sensitive reflection of these communities and their needs. Such a move is a means of including refugee and immigrant voices in the work meant to support them, and the above pamphlets might be strengthened by including refugee or immigrant input. Other pamphlets could be created, based on the models provided, to focus on additional issues.

Beyond these basic suggestions, a few more ideas may be useful. Iteration—the process of designing, public testing, and redesigning—can be a powerful tool in the process of creating an item that meets users’ needs (Tom Kelley & David Kelley 21, 108-115, 194-195). This handbook can be seen as the first iteration of an engagement and education outreach. Any organizations using these pamphlets or a version of them should evaluate their impact (see the pamphlet evaluation survey) and make changes as needed. Such changes should be collaboratively creative integrating both insider and outsider feedback. Speaking of collaborative brainstorming, which initially refrains from judging ideas, Kelley and Kelley assert that “[i]t is the back and forth of ideas that can lead you to new and unexpected places” (163-166).

This collaborative creation is much needed. Kelley and Kelley write, “Gathering diverse minds together can be particularly valuable when facing complex and multi-dimensional challenges,” and, “Multidisciplinary groups in any organization can cut through structural and hierarchical barriers to create an innovative mix of new ideas” (187, 189). Community support

of immigrants requires participants to move beyond racial, religious, cultural, and class differences. The issues facing resettlement and, indeed, larger social issues in America—such as housing—have challenging structural elements that need creative solutions and the impact of widespread engagement. Elena Korbut, of Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, mentioned that their organization is part of a consortium with other Houston resettlement organizations, and she spoke about how their congresswoman worked with a hotel owner to get units. Networking matters. Furthermore, collaborative creation can be a means not only of improving outreach and marketing but also of finding creative solutions to entrenched problems facing resettlement organizations and their clients.

Conclusion

The constraints which resettlement organizations face direct refugee advocates to nurture collaboration with community members in order to expand the resources that can be engaged in support of refugee communities. This handbook has presented a series of pamphlets as one means of engaging with and educating various communities in Columbus towards providing better support for refugees specifically and immigrants more generally. The main themes of this project are engagement and education, engagement leading to education leading to further engagement. This education strives to not only provide communities with information and practical means for engagement but also to encourage self-reflection concerning attitudes towards foreigners because successful resettlement and integration—belonging—cannot occur if host communities continue to harbor harmful conceptions of refugees, even if subconsciously. Finally, this project recognizes the critical importance of

building networks of advocacy through relationships within and across communities in support of refugees.

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