Cultural Awareness in Regional Disaster Planning

Division of Global Populations and Infectious Disease Prevention
Bureau of Infectious Disease
MA Department of Public Health
September 24, 2015
2013 U.S. Census Results

- 990,553 Lawful Permanent Residents
- 69,909 Refugee Arrivals
- 25,199 Asylums Granted

Focus of the Presentation

Assist disaster planners and responders to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to refugees and other non-US born populations.

Provide an overview of DPH’s refugee health program; this would not include all immigrant and other non-US born arrivals in the state.
Objectives

- Define cultural awareness
- Explain why cultural awareness is important
- Gain understanding of refugee migration and the plight of being displaced
- Provide demographics and statistics of refugees living in the western region
- Considerations for incorporating a multicultural approach to disaster relief
- Provide helpful information and resources on how to work with refugee families affected by disasters
“Cultural awareness becomes central when we have to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interpret and evaluate things in different ways. What is considered an appropriate behavior in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when I use my meanings to make sense of your reality.”

—— What is Cultural Awareness, anyway? How do I build it?  By Stephanie Quappe and Giovanna Cantatore.  www.culturosity.com
Dadaab Refugee Camp

Photo Courtesy: UNHCR  
https://www.unhcr-fluechtlingshilfe.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Bilder/Pressefotos/Dadaab_UNHCR.jpg
Syrian Refugee Camp in Jordan

Photo Courtesy: UNHCR; http://www.unhcr.org/thumb1/50167fdc6.jpg
Culture and Diversity

• The United States is multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual, yet professional trainings do not always reflect the diverse demographics of the communities.

• Individuals representing various cultures are found throughout many towns, cities, and states across the United States.
Bhutanese refugees making yarn for weaving. Butanese Refugee Camps in Nepal

http://yumevision.photoshelter.com/image/I0000IfCz67bd8x8
Need for Cultural Awareness

• An elevated number of traumatic events occur within minority and marginalized groups.
  – Example: The Springfield tornado in the year 2011 affected areas where majority populations were refugees and immigrants.

• There is often greater risk for negative health outcomes in these same groups after a disaster.
  – The disastrous event re-traumatizes refugee populations who fled war, famine, genocide.

• In many situations, disaster services for ethnic minorities and marginalized groups can be lacking.
  – In disasters, we are not always prepared to serve the basic needs of all ethnic minorities represented in the community (Safety, medical care, language, food, gender differences)
Factors Causing Retraumatization

- Racism
- Discrimination
- Past experiences such surviving war, disasters, genocide and displacement.

Global Displacement: 2000-2014 (end year)

Refugees and asylum-seekers
Internally displaced persons
People newly displaced during the year*

Major Refugee-Hosting Countries (end-2014)

**Fig. 3** Major refugee-hosting countries | end-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Refugees (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Rep. of Iran</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reflects proportion out of global number of refugees at end-2014.

- Refugee figure for Syrians in Turkey is a Government estimate.
- Includes 29,300 Iraqi refugees registered with UNHCR in Jordan. The Government estimates the number of Iraqis at 400,000 individuals at the end of March 2015. This includes refugees and other categories of Iraqis.
- The 300,000 Vietnamese refugees are well integrated and in practice receive protection from the Government of China.
Who is a Refugee?

Photo Courtesy UNHCR/AFP C. Archenbault

A refugee is someone who “owing to a 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 to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”

- The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
Durable Solutions

1. Voluntary **Repatriation** - returning to one’s home country. *If returning home is not feasible because of ongoing instability or conflict, then,*

2. **Integration** in the second county of asylum - establishing roots in the host or asylum country. *If the refugee is not sufficiently protected in the original host country or is considered to be particularly vulnerable for various reasons (e.g., disabled/injured, women-at-risk, etc) then*

3. **Resettlement** to a third country - establishing a new life in a new country.
Top Ten Resettlement Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Resettlement</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>47,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>11,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>5,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71,411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNHCR Resettlement Departures in 2013

The U.S. is the leading resettlement country!
The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program is a private public partnership and has been providing safe haven to refugees since 1975.

The three-millionth refugee arrived in February of 2012!
The Refugee Act of 1980 reformed the United States immigration law and admitted refugees on systematic basis for humanitarian reasons.

The Act created the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the U.S.
Populations Served

- Newly arriving refugees
- Asylees
- Cuban/Haitian Entrants
- Special Immigrant Visa holders
- Victims of trafficking
Annually, the President, in consultation with Congress, determines the authorized target for refugee admissions.

The target for federal Fiscal Year 2015 is 70,000 refugees and 7,000 Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients.
US Admissions Priorities

- Process outlined in Refugee Act of 1980
  - Annual Report to Congress includes
    - Overview of situation
    - Admissions priorities
    - Budget
- **Priority 1**: Individual cases
- **Priority 2**: Groups of cases
- **Priority 3**: Individual family reunion cases
## Regional Targets

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>15,500</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near East and South Asia</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>35,500</td>
<td>35,500</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unallocated Reserve</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>80,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>80,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>76,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>70,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>70,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>70,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>70,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resettlement Support Centers

- The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) manages the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program through contracts with nine Resettlement Support Centers (RSCs) overseas and nine national Resettlement Agencies in the United States.
Resettlement Support Centers

RSCs are funded by PRM and are responsible for the accurate processing of refugees referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and approved for resettlement to the U.S. by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Resettlement Agencies

- Resettlement Agencies, also known as Voluntary Agencies (Volags) are non-governmental organizations that hold contracts with PRM to provide refugee resettlement services through the Reception and Placement (R&P) Program.
- There are currently nine national Resettlement Agencies that provide resettlement services through a network of nearly 350 local offices.
U.S. Refugee Admissions Program

1. Receive Referrals
2. RSC Prescreen Interview
3. Security Checks
4. USCIS Interview
5. Post-USCIS Medical Exam Assurance
   - Final Security Checks
6. Cultural Orientation

USA
Refugee Resettlement Process: US Entry

**Overseas**
Visa issued/Cleared for travel

**US Ports Of Entry**
Quarantine officers review paperwork-
Paperwork forwarded to CDC/DGMQ

**State Local Jurisdictions**
DGMQ notifies health department of
refugee arrival
Arrivals by State
Refugee arrivals in MA: Top 5 nationalities

- Iraq: 32%
- Somalia: 16%
- Bhutan: 11%
- Democratic Republic of Congo: 10%
- Afghanistan: 5%

Arrivals January 1 – December 31, 2014 (N = 2,010); Source: MAVEN
Top 6 refugee resettlement cities in MA

Arrivals January 1-December 31, 2014
N=2,010 (who stayed in MA, with known address as of 1/29/2015)
Western MA Refugee Resettlement Over A Four Year Period (2011-2014)

• Total number: 2,500 individuals
  – Countries represented:
    • Iraq, Bhutan, Nepal, Somalia, Burma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Burundi, Central African Republic, Ukraine, Moldova, Afghanistan, Iran, Cuba

-Source: Office for Refugee and Immigrants, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (ORI data taken from 2011-2014)
Refugee Languages Spoken

- Arabic --- Syria, Iraq, Northern Sudan
- Nepali --- Bhutan
- Burmese --- Burma
- Karen --- Burma
- Chin --- Burma
- Somali --- Somalia
- Kinyarwanda --- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Russian --- Countries
- Kiswahili --- Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Tigrinya --- Eritrea, Ethiopia
- Amharic --- Ethiopia
- Kirundi --- Burundi
- Dari --- Afghanistan
- Pashtu --- Afghanistan
Limited English Proficiency: Limited ability to read, write and speak English

- Literacy - Some people do not read or write in their own language.
- Communication gaps create barriers for refugees/other non-English speakers in receiving adequate care or services
Language Barriers

• Absence of bilingual/ bicultural workers results in a lack of appropriate service provision to the affected individuals.

• High risk of misdiagnoses and poor quality of treatment when working with populations that do not speak English.

"Russell Jones, Ph.D., April Naturale, Ph.D., (2012) “Cultural Awareness: Children and Disasters”
Family Structure and Dynamics

- Children are used as interpreters when the head of the family or other adult household members cannot communicate or speak in the host language.

- Disasters shift the family dynamics
  - Sometimes older children may assume the roles and responsibilities of the family

Risk Factors to Consider When Using a Child as an Interpreter

- Role reversal stressors
- Risk of traumatizing, re-traumatizing children.
- Guilt or feeling responsible
- Some topics may be inappropriate for the child.
- Lack of vocabulary and knowledge lead to errors in translation.

Guiding Principles

• Find a cultural liaison to assist with professionals’ understanding of behavioral health issues and trauma.

• Use professional or adult interpreters and/or trusted community organizations to stifle rumors and correct distorted perceptions.

• Focus on supporting children through the traumatic stressors and loss.

• Build capacity and relationships with local organizations and agencies serving the various ethnic communities.

Resources in the Community

- Local resettlement agencies such as Jewish Family Services, or Ascentria Care Alliance (formerly known as Lutheran Social Services)
- Bhutanese Association of Western Massachusetts
- Department of Public Health Division of Global Populations
- Western Massachusetts Refugee and Immigrant Consortium
- Enlaces de Familias: provides resources for Spanish speaking families (not exclusively service Spanish speaking families)
- Nuestras Raices: An urban collective that provides training, education and empowerment to Latino/Hispanic residents of Holyoke and beyond
Contact Information

• Jewish Family Services Tel: 413-737-2601 (Resettlement agency for Refugees)
  • Cultural Broker Program for Refugees
  • Family Support Services
• Ascentria Care Alliance Tel: 413-787-0725 (Resettlement agency for Refugees)
• Bhutanese Society of Western Massachusetts: bhutanesesocietyofwm@gmail.com
  Founder: Bhuwan Gautam
• Department of Public Health Division of Global Populations Tel: 413-586-7525 (x3141)
  Coordinator: Olivia Peters
• Western Massachusetts Refugee and Immigrant Consortium (WMRIC)
  wmriccoord@gmail.com
• Refugee 101 USRAP Overview (RCUSA for SCORR) Association of Refugee Health Coordinators – 6_24_15)
• Enlaces de Familias: 299-301 Main Street Holyoke, MA Tel: 413-532-9300
• Nuestras Raices: 329 Main Street Holyoke, MA Tel: 413-535-1789
Sources

- (Data) Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Global Populations and Infectious Disease Prevention (2011-2015 arrival data)
- SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center website: [http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dtac-resources](http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dtac-resources)
Arrival Reports, Fact Sheets and FAQs, R&P Affiliate Directory
WELCOME to the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange (CORE), a technical assistance program designed to strengthen linkages between overseas CO programs for refugees approved for admission to the United States and Reception and Placement (R&P) activities conducted upon their arrival. Managed by the U.S. Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration, and administered by the International Rescue Committee, CORE provides information, materials and technical assistance to overseas CO programs and to domestic refugee service providers.

NOTE: This website is under construction, so please check back frequently for updates

The activities of the Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange are financed under an agreement with the United States Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Refugee Backgrounders, Welcome Guides, R&P Curriculum, Lesson Plans
Case Study

• Mary Allen, RN will present a case study from her experience working in the emergency shelters of West Springfield after the 2011 Springfield Tornado.
Thank you!

Questions?