How the Needs of Refugees Can Be Met in the United States:

A Syrian Refugee Focus

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

EU	**European Union**
INS	**Immigration and Naturalization Service**
IOM	**International Organization of Migration**
OECD	**Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development**
ORR	**Office of Refugee Resettlement**
PRM	**Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration**
RCA	**Refugee Cash Assistance**
RMA	**Refugee Medical Assistance**
UNHCR	**United Nations Refugee Agency**
USRAP	**United States Refugee Admissions Program**
VOLAG	**National Voluntary Agency**

> "When an entire segment of the world is burned and reduced to a lawless battleground for thugs and mercenaries, a land where government does not exist, where the slate of history is being wiped out and hope has drowned in gallons of innocent blood, the only respite comes in the form of the open seas and what lies beyond the horizon. So ships are boarded and pain is tolerated just a little while longer."
>
> -Aysha Taryam

So what is waiting for them when they arrive?

SECTION 1: REFUGEE CRISES IN PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The affirmation of the concept of "refugees" was largely a response to World War II. Consequentially, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), which is widely regarded as the definitive authority in issues relating to the status of refugees and their resettlement, was founded shortly thereafter in 1950 as it took over from the International Refugee Organization. On January 1 of the following year, the UNHCR passed the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees with the original objective to provide aid for those persons forcefully displaced from their homes during and after World War II. Before the adoption of the Convention, the only opportunity for recourse for the people in question was to apply for emigration in another country. However, if rejected, they would have no means to assure their own security (Canada International, 2011). The general assumption of the Convention is that, under its framework, refugees will be secure and achieve self-sufficiency when accepted into another state of the Convention.

Today, a large-scale refugee crisis is a result of the Syrian conflict[1]. So far, the conflict has caused 13.5 million people to require humanitarian assistance. Given that Syria's total population was 22,157,800, statistics display that over 50% of Syria's population is currently displaced. For most, the direct route out of Syria leads to

[1] Syrian Conflict: Following the "Arab Spring" uprisings in 2011, pro-democracy protests were initially responsive to the arrest and torture of multiple teenagers. Violent demonstrations from President Assad's government quickly escalated the situation, as a group of protestors became rebel brigades that plunged Syria into a state of civil war that leaves 13.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance today (BBC, 2016a).

Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, or Turkey. However, at least 450,000 of those people in the five neighboring countries are in need of resettlement compared to the 162,151 resettlement places that have been offered (Amnesty International, 2016). While the primary emphasis must be put on getting those in need to safety, lack of efficient resettlement programs can be also detrimental to refugee populations abroad.

This paper examines the efficiency of the resettlement methods enforced for individuals who have been granted refugee status in a new state. There is particular emphasis put on the resettlement program in the United States, where there have been numerous critiques of different aspects of these programs, including the often times exceedingly limited support provided by National Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs). For the purpose of this study, the following definition of resettlement was used:

> *"Resettlement is the process of finding a new home, obtaining adequate employment, and developing the ability to function in a new society, while retaining a sense of appreciation and pride for one's cultural heritage"* (Taft, 1979, p.33).

The paper will examine how the methods used in the United States will specifically meet the needs of Syrian refugees resettling there. The paper presents a model in which changes to the United States resettlement framework will provide an optimal situation for Syrian refugees, putting particular emphasis on their desire to locate family members, economic stability, medical assistance (particularly regarding mental trauma), struggle against Islamophobic abuse, and proportionately competent levels of education.

Volumes could be written on the needs of specific refugee populations given the innumerable amount of factors and variables that contribute to specific needs. The purpose of this paper is to offer an analysis of the observed and predicted needs of refugees during resettlement based on the information available and the focus on the condition of Syrian refugees, which is particularly relevant at the moment. Section 2 of this paper goes into detail describing the concept of refugees throughout the world today and which areas of the world are most affected. This includes a subsection on the role of the United States in the issue. Section 3 describes the specific observed and predicted needs of Syrian refugees from their transport from Syria, to their reception and resettlement in the United States. Section 4 displays a more detailed depiction of the economic policies in place in the United States that are a part of the resettlement process. Lastly, Section 5 of the paper will bring forth recommendations based on the study's findings regarding how resettlement agencies in the United States may alter their practices to meet the needs of this particular group.

SECTION 2: THE CONCEPT OF REFUGEES TODAY

A. Definition of Refugees

The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was amended in 1967 with the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which removed inhibiting geographical and temporal restrictions. Nevertheless, the original 1951 Convention refugee definition is in effect today. The UNHCR defines a "refugee" as any person who:

> *"owing to well-founded fear of being prosecuted 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"* (UNHCR, 2016a, p. 14).

The definition determines who is categorically a legal "refugee." However, it must be noted that there is a distinct difference between a refugee and an "asylum-seeker." An "asylum-seeker" as defined by the UNHCR is: "*someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitively evaluated"* (UNHCR, 2016b). The Migration Policy Institute goes on to distinguish refugees and asylum-seekers based on their location of determination. With regard to applications into the United States,

asylum claims are considered within the United States, while refugee determinations are often considered while the refugee is still outside the country. Legally, both determination processes must abide by the same regulations and be held to the equivalent standard (Kerwin, 2011).

The clarity of these definitions is extremely important, as an acceptance or declination of a refugee application may have devastating effect on the life and well-being of an applicant. However, in the event of rejected applications, applicants do have the opportunity to appeal the decision to the refugee status determination judicial body of the country, in which the claim was rejected. We may consider the example of a Tamil[2] male citizen of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, who applied for refugee status with the Refugee Status Branch of the New Zealand Immigration Service on March 28, 1998. Following an interview on November 5, 1998, his initial application was rejected on April 23, 1999, on the basis that his fear was not of persecution, but rather of civil war, which is not included as a convention reason for refugee status to be granted. The New Zealand Immigration Service deducted that his persecution was not a cause of his ethnicity, as the Tamil man had indicated. The applicant appealed the decision and, upon further examination and research, it was determined that (1) the Civil War in Sri Lanka was based on issues of race and politics, and (2) the appellant's persecution was a result of his Tamil ethnicity and perceived political support of a group who were in conflict with the Sri Lankan Army. Consequentially, the appellant was granted refugee

[2] Tamil: A member of a people inhabiting parts of southern India and Sri Lanka (oxforddictionaries.com).

status in New Zealand (Refugee Appeal, 1999). This allowance for appeal generates a more efficient determination process.

B. Refugees in the World Today

Since the international community began recognizing refugees and their needs, variation in the number and type of asylum seeking requests can be noted depending on situations of peace, violence, or any given interval in between. The past decade displayed palpable trends that indicate the continuation of the issue of forcibly displaced peoples. Between the year 2000 and 2010, the total number of refugees and asylum seekers fluctuated between 38 million and 43 million. However, after 2011, when the level rested at 42.5 million, the figure steadily grew to 59.5 million total refugees and asylum seekers worldwide by 2014. These are unprecedented figures in the post-World War II era. Simply put, if all of these displaced people were to make up the population of a country, they would make up the 24th largest nation in the world. More specifically, at the end of 2014, the total number of global refugees, excluding the population of asylum seekers, was estimated at 14.4 million. This figure represented an approximate 23% increase from the 11.7 million recorded at the end of 2013. The levels of refugees and asylum seekers affirms the stance that the protection and introduction of more durable solutions for refugees shall remain an integral part of the UNHCR's mission (UNHCR, 2016c). These trends implicate that the issue is not fading away from the forefront, but rather it is in need of more attention from the international community.

C. Role of the U.S.

Forced Displacement is a global issue, yet evidence suggests that certain countries may become increasingly expected to answer the call and find the solution more often than others. In 2014, a record high of 1.7 million applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted. Only about 15% of which were processed by the UNHCR. However, the United States was the third highest recipient of individual applications (121,200), behind only Russia (274,700) and Germany (173,100). Furthermore, of the 103,800 refugees who submitted to states for resettlement by the UNHCR, the United States took in the vast majority (73,000) (UNHCR, 2016c). In addition, the Migration Policy Institute, which is well known for its analysis of migration and refugee policies, acknowledges that "in each year since 1994, the United States has resettled more refugees than all other member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) combined" (Kerwin, 2011, p. 3). While developing nations including Pakistan, Syria, and Iran contain the highest refugee populations, the United States is host to the largest resettlement program (Kerwin, 2011). Recognizing those figures, the United States has a responsibility to ensure efficiency in its methods of resettlement to meet the needs of the significant number of incoming refugees.

Recently, some states, including Germany, have made adjustments to accept larger refugee populations in response to the Syrian conflict. However, western governments have also introduced policies to "prevent, deter, limit the stay of, and manage the settlement of asylum seekers and refugees" (Gibney and Hanson, 2003, p. 5). This is not a new type of behavior. The United States government's interdiction of

Haitian refugees[3] in the 1970s is a depictive example of these deterrence regimes (Hamlin, 2014). These deterrence regimes are sometimes in contradiction of the "nonrefoulement" policy described in Article 33[4] of the 1951 Convention (UNHCR, 2016a). I conclude that the deterrence regimes often represent a form of racial discrimination, but for the purpose of this study, this paper examines the needs of the refugees as they arrive in the United States and require resettlement.

The next section of this paper further details their needs through each step of the transportation, placement, and resettlement process.

[3] During the 1970s, political repression and instability caused many Haitians to seek refuge in the United States. This influx of asylum seekers represented what the US government would perceive to be the first group of "unwanted asylum seekers." They were poor and black, and there admission served no geopolitical strategy. President Carter and President Reagan began implementing policy to interdict Haitian boats at sea and turn them back to their country before they could secure a hearing on US soil. This practice would later be visible under President H. W. Bush and President Clinton (Hamlin, 2014).

[4] **Article 33: Prohibition of Expulsion or Return ("Refoulement")** 1. No Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion (UNHCR, 2016a).

SECTION 3: NEEDS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES DURING THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

A. Course to the U.S.

For Syrian refugees, the course to the United States may be lengthy and emotionally and physically demanding. In this case, the UNHCR is generally responsible for the referral of the refugees to the United States. There are select instances in which the U.S. Embassy or a non-governmental organization may conduct the referral (USCIS, 2016). There is also the possibility for Syrian refugees who are beneficiaries of approved I-130 immigrant visa petitions[5] to apply directly to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). However, processing for this program is only available in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates (USDOS, 2016). The I-130 Petition (Petition for

[5] **"**For citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States to establish the relationship to certain alien relatives who wish to immigrate to the United States. **Note**: A separate form must be filed for each eligible relative. USCIS processes Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative, as a visa number becomes available. Filing and approval of an I-130 is only the first step in helping a relative immigrate to the United States. Eligible family members must wait until there is a visa number available before they can apply for an immigrant visa or adjustment of status to a lawful permanent resident" (USCIS, 2016)

Alien Relative) is only available to those who have relatives who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States (USCIS, 2016). Additionally, Syrians are qualified for Priority-3[6] (P-3) access to the USRAP if they are outside of Syria and have immediate family members who have already entered the United States and are also refugees (USDOS, 2016). Considering the stipulations with regard to family relations, the UNHCR referral process remains by far the most common method of access to the United States for Syrian refugees (USCIS, 2016). However, the complexity of the process may take a toll on Syrian refugees health in many ways, causing them to require assistance in the form of food, water, medical assistance, monetary assistance, facilitated travel, and integration assistance. Typically, the passage to the United States from Syria may be divided into four steps; (1) Flight, (2) enduring time spent in or out of camps in neighboring countries, (3) travel, and (4) clearance in the United States.

- Flight: Due to the ongoing conflict in Syria, USRAP is not able to conduct any component of the refugee processing in Syria (USDOS, 2016). As a result, Syrian refugees must flee the country in order to gain access to a UNHCR office for protection and assistance. The immediate neighbors and therefore, most common destinations include Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq (MPC, 2016). For many, the decision to flee to a neighboring country comes out of absolute necessity. The escalating violence, economic crisis, and unavailability of medical resources means that many families cannot survive in their homes. It is also not easy to enter all neighboring countries. Syria's neighboring countries are now being faced with extraordinary responsibility with regard

[6] The Priority 3 category is family-based and only open to designated nationalities of special humanitarian concern for the purpose of family-reunification refugee processing (Refugee Council USA, 2016).

to the sheer number of Syrian refugees they are expected to support without sufficient aid from the international community. That, coupled with security concerns, has influenced neighboring countries to further restrict their borders (UNHCR, 2016d).

- Enduring Life in or out of Camps in Neighboring Countries: Syria's neighboring countries generally have refugee camps to house the asylum seekers. This is normally done on a temporary basis, or until a referral can be conducted. However, due to the challenges that many of these neighbor states face, the vast majority of refugees live outside of camps (UNHCR, 2016d). Lebanon actually maintains a no-camp policy; so Syrian refugees most often reside in private residence, abandoned buildings, or tents (CPA, 2015). While, the UNHCR states "Camps should be the exception and only a temporary measure in response to forced displacement," (UNHCR, 2016e) the conditions can actually be far worse for those refugees not afforded a position in the camp. In Jordan, as of September 2015, 86% of Syrians living in urban and rural areas outside of the camps were living below the poverty line. At the time, only 12% of refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and other North African countries lived in formal refugee camps. Coupled with the lack of space in camps, funding shortfalls experienced by NGO's create a negative environment for refugees across the region. For example, as of September 2015, the World Food Programme had to cut 229,000 refugees from its food assistance program in Jordan in that month alone. Many of the refugees residing in these neighboring countries have virtually lost hope of referral (UNHCR, 2016d). Sometimes these refugees who have lost hope of referral attempt the risky voyage to Europe.

- Travel: Upon receiving their referral, Syrian refugees will generally travel to the

United States through air travel. At this time, it is important to coordinate land transport to the airport, background checks by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and notifications to the appropriate resettlement agency. If there is any sort of miscommunication, refugees can end up arriving at the wrong location in the United States. Refugees require organized facilitation throughout this travel period (Taft, 1979).

- Clearance in the United States: Upon their arrival in the United States, the refugees must pass through another screening process. This normally occurs in the airport, at which point an INS official will conduct a background check. At this point a VOLAG representative meets the refugees and aids them in their continuation onto their final destinations (Taft, 1979).

B. Reception and Placement

The strenuous passage to the United States creates a situation in which refugees who do successfully land there can be extremely fatigued and in need of assistance. This coincides with the time in which the Syrian refugees first encounter the tangible American lifestyle, as opposed to the formal description procured from their limited exposure and interaction with government officials throughout the passage from Syria. Typically, the reception and placement of a Syrian refugee may also be divided into four steps; (1) Reception, (2) Housing, (3) Orientation, and (4) Income (Taft, 1979).

- Reception: After refugees have traveled from the airport to their final destinations, there is a sponsor waiting for each of them, which is generally an individual, a family, or a church group. The sponsors are supposed to meet the refugees, introduce them to the layout of the neighborhoods, and respond to any necessary immediate needs

(Taft, 1979). Throughout this time, a Syrian refugee will be beginning to fathom his or her foreseeable future.

- Housing: Generally, refugees will stay in the homes of sponsors or in a motel for the first couple days before more permanent living situation can be set up. Occasionally, publicly subsidized housing is located for the refugee, but in the United States, it is more feasible for refugees to find housing in the private sector. At this point resettlement agencies will also address needs relating to clothing attire, as the Syrian climate may have been very different from areas of the United States (Taft, 1979).

- Orientation: Throughout the orientation process, refugees are essentially given a crash course in American life and culture. This should be specific to the communities that they reside in, including the facilities and customs of the area. The orientation process is made much easier if the refugee in question has family members who are already residents of, and are familiar with, the community (Taft, 1979).

- Income: Perhaps the most important part of the reception and placement process is the procurement of income. The VOLAG should help the refugee to attain some type of employment. However, this is not always immediately accomplished. This varies depending on the case, as some refugees are expected to seek out their own employment (USDOS, 2016). The United States government provides a form of payment to refugees throughout the beginning stages of resettlement, a subject that will be covered more extensively in Section 4.

C. Resettlement

The resettlement program in the United States is permanent, meaning that any individual granted refugee status there is afforded the opportunity to start a new life

(USDOS, 2016). This study identifies six aspects of life, in which refugees require the most service: (1) relationship, (2) economic, (3) health, (4) social, (5) legal, and (6) education. Each condition can lend itself to the situation of Syrian refugees specifically.

- Relationships: Many refugees can end up at least temporarily separated from their families. They most likely will not have enough money to fly back across the Atlantic Ocean to visit family members and friends, and if they did, many refugees are not aware of their families' whereabouts. Most Syrian refugees will be concerned as to their families' well-being. For many, the number one priority is to locate their family. In the United States, there are organizations like the Red Cross who do offer family reunification services. However the process can be very difficult to navigate for non-native English speakers. Any issues with the application can take months to appeal (Red Cross, 2016).

- Economic: The refugees' need for income is a primary concern, with regard to achieving self-sufficiency and integrating in the United States. While there are some cash-assistance programs, most refugees must find employment, and that employment can often be at a lower level than they are accustomed to in their country of origin. It should be noted that refugees are forced into forms of private sector employment or public sector welfare far more often than American citizens. Public employment or publicly-funded training is extremely difficult for refugees to succeed in, as they are largely barred from any kind of federal employment (Taft, 1979). However, the Syrian refugees represent a rather unique case, as many of them hail from middle-class households and are well educated. Relative to other refugee groups, a larger than average proportion of the Syrian refugees come from established professional backgrounds, with

some already receiving formal education and training in fields such as medicine or banking (McHugh, 2015). These figures can potentially open windows of opportunity that were previously not thought rational by the United States government with regard to refugee populations.

- Health: Refugee health needs are often unique to the circumstances that the population has had to endure. First, long stays in refugee camps or other unsanitary residence can easily cause illness (Taft, 1979).

Due to the nature of the Syrian conflict, many Syrians refugees will have "experienced some form of trauma, including losing family members, being subject to or witnessing violent acts, or suffering from conflict-induced physical disabilities due to the use of barrel bombs and torture. According to the UNHCR, 43 percent of Syrian refugees referred for resettlement were submitted under the Survivor of Violence and/or Torture category in 2013 and 2014" (CPA, 2015, p. 9). For this reason, an essential part of their resettlement will be the provision of mental health and psychosocial support services. This should not be a one-time provision of needs, as mental and psychological needs can arise months after the entrance into the new community (CPA, 2015).

- Social: In order to comprehend the social needs of a Syrian refugee in the United States, you should imagine that you have just endured a violent conflict in your homeland and embarked on an involuntary journey across the world, with (or without) loved ones. Imagine that now, you must deal with the daily uncertainties that come with living in an entirely new community and learning a new language in a country that has more recently displayed various Islamophobic tendencies. More than half of the State Governors in the United States have declared that Syrian refugees are not welcome in their states. The 31

governors in question have described that their statements were made for security reasons following the Paris Terrorist Attacks[7]. In the end, the Federal Government makes the decisions on refugee acceptance, but the numerous public displays of anti-refugee rhetoric by political officials illustrate the extent to which social integration may be the most difficult process for Syrian refugees in the United States. The limited number of Syrian refugees who are accepted may amplify the difficulties of social integration. It can be seen that some refugee populations such as Cubans go through a secondary migration[8], as they seek out familiar communities. If Cuban refugees travel to Miami, they can find almost exclusive Cuban communities (Taft, 1979). However, there are far fewer predominantly Syrian communities in the United States. As of November 19, 2015, only 1,500 Syrian refugees had been accepted into the United States since 2011 (Fantz and Brumfield, 2015). With regard to the social integration of Syrian refugees, the Government offers very little.

- Legal: The most prominent issue related to refugee services that many refugees encounter is the "legal barrier in many state and substate jurisdictions to the employment of aliens who have not achieved immigrant status" (Taft, 1979, p. 31). This can

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[7] On November 13, 2015, there were a series of attacks throughout Paris that produced 130 casualties. At the scene of one of the bombings, a Syrian passport was found bearing the possible name of the bomber, suggesting that the man was from Idlib, Syria. Authorities thought the passport to be fake, as a passport bearing the same name and data, but a different picture had been found on another migrant, implicating that both men bought fake passports from the same counterfeiter. The false implication that one of the terrorists benefitted from France's refugee intake has had detrimental affect on the social integration of many real Syrian refugees (BBC, 2016b).

[8] "Secondary Migration is a legal term which refers specifically to refugees who are placed for resettlement initially in one location in the United States, and who decide to relocate to another part of the United States during their first eight months in the country" (DHHS, 2012).

significantly affect outreach programs to Syrian refugees. For example, if there is a large population of Syrian refugees being resettled in a specific county, but the local jurisdiction there is not allowed to hire qualified refugees to provide outreach, including English/Arabic translation, it will become far more difficult for the new refugee population to benefit from such services.

Most Syrian refugees will eventually go through two legal processes throughout their long-term resettlement. First, they will apply for permanent resident alien (immigrant) status from INS. Second, the refugee will most likely apply for United States citizenship (Taft, 1979). These are both important legal status promotions.

- Education: Education is one of the main areas of resettlement in which the unique nature of the Syrian refugee population must be taken into account. First, UNHCR statistics display that over half (51.8%) of registered Syrian refugees in the Middle East/North Africa Region are under the age of eighteen. This proportion displayed by the data means that the efficient integration of the Syrian youth population

Age	**Male (49.3%)**	**Female (50.6%)**	**Male and Female Statistics Combined**
0-4	8.8%	8.3%	17.1%
5-11	11.2%	10.6%	21.8%
12-17	6.6%	6.2%	12.8%
18-59	21.4%	23.9%	45.3%
60+	1.3%	1.6%	2.9%
TOTAL	49.3%	50.6%	99.9%

Figure 1: Age and gender breakdown of 2.1 million Syrians registered by UNHCR in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, 2.7 registered by the Government of Turkey, as well as more than 28,000 Syrian refugees registered in North Africa,

Source: UNHCR, Government of Turkey

into an inclusive educational environment must be a top priority of resettlement agencies in the United States. In addition to the high youth population, Syrian refugees often come from middle-class families, in which they have received relatively high levels of education. There is a notable chance that Syrian youths will have ambition to attend University (McHugh, 2015). In this way, the Syrian refugee population represents a slightly different populace than those the United States has become accustomed to welcoming and resettling.

The next section examines in more detail with regard to the United States economic policies and how they influence the above-mentioned needs of refugees during resettlement.

SECTION 4: RESETTLEMENT APPROACHES IN THE U.S.

In certain situations, it may be noted that refugees from Syria will find unfacilitated travel to a EU state far more plausible than to the United States due to travel methods. However, to meet this need, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) arranges and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) supports the transportation of refugees to the United States utilizing a loan program (Kerwin, 2011). In essence, each refugee arriving in the United States is offered an interest-free loan by IOM that will cover the travel expenses to the United States. The refugee in question will sign prior to their departure, indicating that they will pay off the loan within 46 months after their arrival into the United States. The repayments are made to the PRM who then use the funds to defray the costs of travel of future refugees. Refugees generally succeed in paying off these loans within the allotted 46 months (IOM, 2016).

PRM also finances the reception and placement services for refugees during the first months of their time in the United States. This period often lasts 30 to 90 days. However, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provides refugee cash assistance (RCA) and refugee medical assistance (RMA), which may be received up to 8 months

after arrival in the United States. Refugees must meet income and resource eligibility requirements to take advantage of RCA and RMA (Kerwin, 2011).

In the United States, there is a multifaceted approach to the provision of benefits and services for refugees. The ORR coordinates partnerships with states, VOLAGs, and community and faith-based groups to provide these benefits in the areas of job preparation, training and placement; lingual assistance, day care; and services with regard to employment recertification. The main contractors of refugee resettlement, VOLAGs, operate through about 350 affiliate organizations in 49 states. Wyoming is the only state to have been left out of the resettlement process. There is little issue with regard to the support provided by the VOLAGs, but the consistency of the time frame, in which that support is effective can present problems for recently recognized refugees. The contractors' obligatory support of the majority of refugees terminates after only four months. At this point, the financial obligation is passed to social services at the local, state, and federal levels (Barnett, 2011). This assumption that social services are capable and willing to take on large numbers of relatively new refugees, while contractors move on to more profitable new recipients of refugee status, contributes to inconsistency and confusion in the resettlement process.

The partnerships of the ORR state that they generally aim to promote integration through a plan to boost self-sufficiency with employment. However, the ORR does not track the long-term economic stability of resettled refugees. Notably, the ORR does track the encompassing outcomes of their employment programs far beyond the VOLAG contractor's initial support ceases. They may keep account of outcomes for up to 60 months (Kerwin, 2011). The monitoring of relevant statistics for 60 months or less can

often be an effective indication of long-term employment and self-sufficiency. However, there are cases in which the time period does not provide a sufficient window to view a true indication of a refugee's long-term financial trajectory. Cultural variables can potentially elongate the assimilation process.

The self-sufficiency itself is monitored through a comparison of the refugee incomes with actual living expenses in the area of resettlement. ORR figures also track the percent of refugees who attain employment out of the number who are eligible (Kerwin, 2011).

In terms of additional funds passed on to certain individual refugees, ORR offers a MG or Matching Grant Program, which is designed to provide funds sufficient for the refugees to establish self-sufficiency within 120-180 days. Not all refugees enter into this program, but in 2009, it was shown that 31% of resettled refugees took part. The program depends on cash and other contributions of $1,100 (and sometimes more) per refugee from the community in which they are received. ORR then matches up to $2,200 for these contributions. ORR acquires this money from within communities or national resources Kerwin, 2011).

The following section, will introduce the findings and recommendations that were devised as a result of this study.

SECTION 5: SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sections 1 and 2 introduced the concept of refugees and the leadership role of the United States in addressing the needs of refugees, putting particular emphasis on the Syrian refugee crisis that has displaced so many individuals in recent years. Section 3 gave an overview of the specific needs that Syrian refugees experience in throughout the entire process, from their flight from Syria, to their eventual long-term resettlement in a community within the United States. Section 4 delved deeper into the resettlement approaches of the United States, while continuing to draw reference to the Syrian refugee crisis. Section 5 of this study deals with the complicated task of devising solutions to the needs of Syrian refugees.

This section lays out recommendations to address the observed and predicted resettlement needs of Syrian refugees in each category that was described in Section 3.

The following recommendations are offered:

RECOMMENDATION #1: That the INS and the UNHCR coordinate the establishment of a more practical database, using the expertise of organizations such as the Red Cross, that will provide

easily understandable forms and applications for refugees who pursue family reunification. In 2016, there are still far too many refugees who do not have adequate means of communicating to their family members.

RECOMMENDATION #2: That VOLAGs discourage secondary migration due to the unexpected expenses that often arise. The primary motivation for secondary migration can be addressed if the original placement of refugees is part of a more strategic process that factors in the tendencies of past refugee populations to migrate towards communities of ethnically similar individuals.

RECOMMENDATION #3: That the NGOs/VOLAGs take financial responsibility for a more extended period of time before sending the refugees to the social services in order to restore public/private partnership. Expanding the waiting period required for eligibility for such services can create a system that encourages the NGOs/VOLAGs to take the responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION #4: That VOLAGs put particular emphasis on their partnerships with mental health and psychological support institutions that can work to counter the effects of serious trauma. The introduction to these services should be included in the orientation during the refugees' reception, regardless of whether or not the refugees display active

symptoms. It must be abundantly clear that these services are available at any point during the resettlement process. This issue should also be handled with the utmost of discretion to avoid any negative social stigma.

RECOMMENDATION #5: That the ORR call for special attention to be paid by law enforcement personnel to the well being of refugees. Given the Islamophobic ideals represented by a portion of the American population; true social acceptance can only come from community members themselves. However, authorities have a responsibility to provide a safe environment. Part of this process should involve the education of law enforcement on just how disconnected acts of terror are from the Muslim majority population. The ORR can publicly reveal the necessity for such action to be taken.

RECOMMENDATION #6: That VOLAGs designate funds and coordinate efforts with educational institutions to provide prep ACT and SAT courses for refugee students who are interested in undergraduate study and may not be familiar with the American education system. This effort should include the training of specialized tutors who are familiar with Syrian culture. If these refugees are to reach their full professional potential, VOLAGs should help them overcome cultural

barriers, including alternative learning methods that may affect test scores.

Conclusion

This study does not presuppose that the six issued recommendations can encompass all future issues that will arise regarding the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the United States. Officials in each future situation must decide to what extent these recommendations are applicable. However, the intent of this study is to utilize the information available to layout viable solutions that officials may turn to in order to prevent any avertible issues and best integrate Syrian refugees into American society.

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