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Research

UNDERSTANDING THE SPECIALIZED NEEDS OF BURMESE REFUGEES IN U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The recent rapid influx of refugee students into U.S. schools has been a learning experience for all concerned. Not only do U.S. refugees come with memories of trauma, they also have specialized educational needs that differ from international students' or voluntary migrants' needs.

Recent refugees have come to the United States with very different socio-historical backgrounds from the majority of U.S. university students. Refugee students have very different stories of integration and incorporation in America than either immigrants or international students. Differentiated experiences demand differentiated treatment.

The scholarship on U.S. refugees in college is scarce. The authors seek to add to the available scholarship by advancing understanding of Burmese refugee students' specialized educational needs through personal narratives. The authors also hope to improve educational provisions for refugee students through attention to their multiple responsibilities and socio-psychological needs. Finally, the authors recommend effective pedagogical strategies for use with refugee students.

Keywords: Refugee, Higher Education, Asian Americans

Introduction

One family torn apart by war is too many. UNCHR

Supporting the human rights and dignity of migrants, forced migrants, and displaced people is one of the major challenges of U.S. higher education in the 21st century. In this article, we reflect on our interviews with refugees as well as on our experiences teaching in higher education to illuminate the specialized educational needs of U.S. Burmese refugee students.

Students from refugee backgrounds now make up a significant proportion of enrollment in U.S. schools and colleges. Between 2010 and 2013, refugees from Iraq, Burma, or Bhutan made up 64 percent of all newly admitted refugees (Zong & Batalava, 2015). The U.S. Department of State admitted 36,144 refugees from 80 countries January-July 2015. Burma was the top country of origin in 2015, with 9,040 refugees admitted to the United States (Corcoran, 2015). In 2011, refugees from Burma and Bhutan (30 percent and 26 percent, respectively) represented the largest refugee subgroups arriving in the United States (Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund, 2014).

Refugees face many challenges during resettlement in the host society. Research shows education is strongly linked with successful resettlement (see, for example, Bal & Arzubigi, 2015; Capps et al. 2015; Moehling, 2007). The least-educated refugee subgroup comes from Burma, with more than half arriving without a high school diploma.

Little research has been published concerning refugee students' college and university experiences after arrival in the U.S. (Rutter, 2007; Reynolds, 2004). Given the recent large influx of refugee students in higher education in the United States, and given the possible difficulties these students may have acclimating themselves to the mainstream academic culture, scholarship that explores U.S. refugee students' experiences and perspectives about the educational milieu is needed.

The United States resettles nearly 70,000 refugees each year (Church World Service, 2005). According to statistics by United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR Global Trends, 2012) in 2012, some 35.8 million persons were displaced: categorically, 17.7 internally displaced people and 10.5 million were refugees. Stateless people are estimated as at least 10 million (however, governments data estimate it as 3.3 in 72 countries). Women and girls account for 48 percent of the world's refugee population and children below 18 years constituted 46 percent of the refugee population (UNHCR Global Trends 2012, p. 3). Developing countries

hosted over 80 percent of the world's refugees (Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Kenya, in that order, are the top three countries providing refuge to the world's refugees). Among the countries involved in formal resettlement efforts, the United States of America was the largest receiving country during the past five years. In 2010, the U.S. resettled 73,923 refugees from more than 50 countries (U. S. Department of Health and Human Service, n. d., Martin, 2011). Once resettled in the United States, refugees are entitled to institutional and government services, including education.

Refugee stories are numerous and multifaceted, and their resettlement is a phenomena of globalization in the economic, political and cultural spheres (Swing, 2012). Unlike the majority of immigrant or international students, most refugees experienced war, ethnic, political or religious persecution, famine, and personal hardships which compel them to leave their homeland. While the immediate physical impact of such experiences is gone, the psychological impact of events that led to displacement last for many years. Pre-migration trauma, both physical and psychological, impacts a refugee's life on multiple levels and for an extended period of time. Physical and/or psychological trauma also negatively impacts a refugee's ability to adapt to the host society (Haggard and Noland, 2011).

Defining Refugees

A refugee, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), is "a person outside of his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion" (Refugee Act, 1980). The UNHCR definition of refugee specifically excludes voluntary migrants — also called immigrants — who left their birth country primarily "to seek a more prosperous life" (Arlington Refugee Services, 2004, p. 3). While educators often view refugee students and immigrant students as one large group with similar needs, the lived experiences of refugee students are likely to have been very different from the lived experiences of immigrant students (Roxas, 2007). Refugees do not leave their birth countries by choice, are likely to have experienced violence or been targeted for abuse during civil unrest in their home countries, and most likely lived in refugee camps prior to arriving in the United States (UNHCR, 2000; Westernmeyer & Wahmanholm, 1996).

A high proportion of the recent refugee population entering the United States has been composed of regions from Middle East, East Asia, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean, and Europe/Central Asia (Martin, 2011). These refugees left their homelands as a result of war and/or civil unrest, or natural and/or sometimes man-made disasters and sometimes combinations of several factors. The majority of the world's refugees come from Third World countries where access to formal education programs is scarce or hampered by military juntas (UNHCR, 2011). More recently, large numbers of ethnic Burmese have sought asylum in the U.S. as a result of civil unrest in Myanmar, and Africans due to civil unrest or genocide.

Myanmar, also known as Burma, was ruled by a military junta from 1962 to 2011. More than 92,000 Burmese have come to the United States since 1990 as refugees or under the Family Reunification Act (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Burma is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia. Its people are diverse ethnically and through their religious identification. This diversity contributes to conflicts in Burma and among Burmese living in the United States. Oral history interviews with U.S. Burmese refugees regarding their experiences with and perceptions about education — including higher education — inform the findings and recommendations in this article.

Refugee College Students in the U.S

Three populations of foreign students enter U.S. colleges and universities: immigrant students, international students, and refugee students. Conversations with admissions personnel at several U.S. colleges suggest admissions officers are trained to view students from each of the three distinct foreign-born populations as having the same needs. While some similarity such as facing challenges of learning new language and culture exist, these three groups of foreign students have very different needs.

Immigrant students are voluntary migrants who move to the United States from another country willingly, and who plan to reside in the U.S. after graduation. International students are not migrants at all, as these students came to the U.S. for the express purpose of furthering their education before returning to their home countries. Refugee students are involuntary migrants who fled their home countries due to political unrest and/or persecution, and who are unable to return to their home country and characterized by vulnerability.

The educational needs of immigrant, international, and refugee

college students, then, vary according to migrant category and also according to variations within category. One of the concern regarding refugees is their ability to integrate into host countries, especially when refugees may or may not possess the skills required to navigate an advanced industrial democracy (Haggard and Noland, 2011). Often, these problems are compounded by language barriers, including refugees' lack of training in their own language prior to migration due to turmoil in their homeland and or long stay in refugee camps where educational opportunity was not available. Therefore, refugee students in particular have educational needs that are not being met by U.S. institutions of higher learning.

The multiple positionalities and identities of students from recent refugee communities often place them in opposition with the mainstream U.S. sociocultural context (Zhou and Bankston, 1998). Institutions of higher learning, such as U.S. colleges and universities, tend to reinforce and perpetuate the values and traditions of the society in which they are located (Apple, 2004). Refugees, unfamiliar with U.S. mainstream culture or schooling experiences, and perhaps not yet comfortable with the language of instruction (English), refugees struggle with the U.S. cultural expectations that adult students be able to make their own decisions, cope efficiently with academic life, and maintain a good Grade Point Average while also acculturating successfully following their arrival in the United States.

Methodology

Most published information about U.S. refugees focuses on general humanitarian issues or general data rather than the schooling of refugees as a U.S. social issue (Omar, 2007). In fact, a recent comprehensive review of the literature suggests there are very few studies about recently arrived refugees residing in the United States, and even fewer studies on refugee education in the U.S. Research examining 21st century U.S. refugees' perspectives on higher education is particularly scarce. The available research does agree on one thing: refugee students have specialized needs that are not being met in educational environments (Flannery, 2007). The authors determined to explore U.S. refugees' educational experiences through a phenomenological approach, and offer recommendations regarding refugee students' specialized educational needs through analyzing and sharing their own experiences interviewing refugees and teaching in a university setting. This information is offered for the benefit of U.S. educators, university administrators, and policy makers.

The goal of the research was to understand and explore the experience of higher education as it is “felt, understood and made sense of” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 84) by Burmese refugees. In phenomenological research, researchers facilitate participants’ “return to experience” in an effort to gather deep descriptions that, in turn, “provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). The first author was Principal Investigator for a study yielding 30 oral history interviews with Burmese migrants living in the Midwestern United States (18 male, 12 female). The majority of interviewees had lived in the U.S. for five or more years at the time of their interview; six had lived in the U.S. for two or fewer years. The second author also is an experienced oral history researcher and conducts interviews with refugees in international settings. In line with the ethno-phenomenological approach (Abbas, 2007, p. 79), the authors determined to draw upon their collective expertise with refugee populations and oral history methodology to inform the current study.

The authors then examined the scholarly literature about experiences and perspectives of Burmese refugees in the U.S. in an attempt to illuminate challenges, barriers, and other possible impediments to refugee students’ college success. Pooling their collective research data and experiences as teachers in higher education environments, the authors used Grounded Theory (Glaser, 2005) in an attempt to identify themes and subthemes. These identified themes, combined with a review of the scholarly literature, became the basis for recommendations.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the authors interweave the professional literature about refugee students with excerpts from interviews with U.S. Burmese refugees. A number of studies have been published regarding K-12 U.S. refugee students’ experiences (see, for example, Portes and Rumbault, 2001; Rong and Preissle, 1998; Lee, 1996; Bemak, 1989; Chung & Lin, 1994; Gibson, 1997; Lee, 1994; Matsuoka, 1990; Nguyen & Williams, 1989). These students, however, have access to assistance from personnel both inside and outside of school, while adult students enrolled in college degree programs or seeking college admission usually do not have access to assistance. Little information, then, is available about the experiences of adult refugee students in the United States and how they negotiate the processes of higher education.

Some studies about refugee youth, however, do provide findings from which recommendations for adult learners may be extrapolated. Studies involving college and university experiences of refugee students in the United Kingdom and Australia also offer valuable information about adult refugee student experiences, as does research on international students in U.S. colleges. What follows is a review of the literature related to refugee experiences from which information about pedagogical needs may be extrapolated.

Trauma

Refugee students often arrive in the U.S. after experiencing significant trauma. Many adolescent and young adult refugees have witnessed the murder, rape, or persecution of immediate family members and close friends (Hek, 2007). Prior to seeking asylum, some of the refugees may also have been personally involved in violence, either through rape or having served as child soldiers (McBrien, 2005). A female Burmese interviewee describes life in Burma under the military government as being filled with “human rights abuses. Forced labor. Killing. Torture. Burning of the villages by the military.... Rapes.” Another Burmese interviewee states matter-of-factly, suppressing the intense emotions the recollection involves, “My father passed away when I was five years old ... he was killed by the Burmese Army.”

Studies reveal that many refugees suffer from “significant health needs and medical conditions (such as infectious diseases) and mental health problems caused by their original stressful living conditions” (Adams and Kirova, 2006: 15). Researchers note the “human dimension of the refugees’ plight is a recurrent theme” in refugee narratives (Haggard and Noland, 2011: 3). Separation of families during escape (Boyden, de Berry, Feeny, & Haret, 2001; Haggard and Noland, 2011; Kim, 2010, Harden, 2012) rape, abduction, and trafficking (Hawk, 2003; K. Lee 2006, Sheridan, 2006, Kim, 2010, Treston, 2004); illness and malnutrition (Haggard and Noland, 2012; Kang, 2006; Kim, 2010), loss of stability and lack of education (Boyden et al., 2002; Tollefson, 1989; Kim, 2009) are among the traumas refugees experiencing before entering the host country. These multiple loss of refugees and their fears, confusion, sadness, loneliness, and alienation are carried with them to their new life in the U. S. (Kirova, 2001). Furthermore, refugees experience depression and anxiety over the loss of connections with their homeland. In many cases, refugees’ depression and anxiety symptoms “resemble post-traumatic stress disorder,” which pose yet another barrier to successful refugee assimilation in the host society (Haggard and Noland,

2011: 3).

Research also demonstrates the deleterious effects migration can bring to lifestyle and diet, “including foods chosen, methods of eating and preparation, number of meals per day, time of eating, and size of portion (Adams and Kirova, 2006: 15). Abrupt changes in young refugees’ diet and lifestyle — including those experienced as students in U.S. schools — can result in negative effects on the health of migrant families and individuals.

Language and Literacy

The language barriers of new refugees experience are among their greatest challenges to higher education. Due to the military junta’s frequent closing of schools and withdrawal from funding education, many Burmese refugees lack formal schooling upon arrival in the United States. In many cases, even those Burmese refugees who were able to attend school in Burma were not taught to read, write, or speak in their own language. “The worst thing was, they never taught [us] our own language [in school],” says one Burmese interviewee. “All we learn [about language in Burmese schools] was writing alphabet — you know, the Burmese alphabet. I am Kachin,” explains another Burmese refugee.

Drawing from other studies on language and literacy, Kirova notes “words achieve their meaning not just from the things they refer to but from associations created in the mind” (Kirova, 2006). Therefore, learning a new language entails more than mere acquiring another linguistic code (Kirova, 2006: 189). Despite their often shared history of ethnicity and language development, U.S. refugees often feel unable to successfully navigate the sociocultural environment in the resettled country due a lack of English facility. This feeling of inadequacy and concomitant acculturation issues may result in stress, anxiety, and feelings of inferiority — psychological challenges that also may contribute to academic failure (Choi, 2011). As such, through language, all immigrants, including refugees, come to understand their new world. The new language can help them to know how best to become what they may become in the new country. Therefore, “as in the experience of turning a house into a home, the experience of learning to use another language brings feelings of discomfort and lack of belonging” (Kirova, 2006: 190).

Unlike learning one’s native language, learning a new language is a conscious, purposeful activity (Kirova, 2006: 191). For native speakers, “in a self-forgetful mode of thinking and speaking, the interaction is truly

conversational or dialogic” (Kirova, 2006: 191) where speaking is “thoughtless” way of being because the thought is an incorporated and in tuned with the dialogic situation (Winning, 1991). In contrast, “the mode for using a new language implies a particular type of **reflective thinking** (bold original emphasis) rather than prereflective living with language” (Kirova, 2006: 191). The effort to choosing the right words involves interruption from an pressing moments and results in more self-consciousness, that speaking the new language “requires that one distances oneself from the situation and contemplates the way in which to act before acting” (van Manne, 1991: 17). Consequently, feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, and fear of being laughed at silence new language learners during their initial acquisition of the new language (Kirova, 2006: 193). The situation for refugees, unlike immigrants who have opportunity to prepare for the living in the new country, could be far worse as they may not have introduced to the new language prior to arrival to the new country.

Refugee students’ school adjustment in the United States has been positively linked to high levels of English literacy (McBrien, 2005). “If I am not an educated person, I can't [interact effectively in U.S. society]. Yes ... if I can't speak English, I can't deal with the people,” says a Burmese refugee. Those students who score well on tests of English reading, writing, and speaking skills tend to be better adjusted to U.S. schooling environments than those whose scores indicate difficulty communicating in English. Another study involving Somali, Russian, Mexican, and Hmong students in Minneapolis finds strong English communication skills among all ethnic groups studied were essential for continued educational achievement, the ability to integrate socially, general human communication, and access to government services (Fennelly & Palasz, 2003).

Educational Qualifications and Employment

Studies find that educated migrants also face challenges in adapting to the host society. Well-educated refugees often fail to find work to match the educational qualifications they earned in their homeland. One of the main reasons for this situation is refugees’ lack of fluency in the language of the host society (Adams and Kirova, 2006) or, in the case of U.S. refugees, lack fluency in speaking, reading, and writing English. A Burmese interviewee, for example, was a school teacher in Burma. “I was a literature student with good qualifications to teach the village kids or [their parents],” he says. Upon arrival in the U.S., however, he found it difficult to get a job and eventually took an assembly line position at a large factory.

Structural and Pedagogical Challenges

The structural and pedagogical differences refugee students face in host society educational systems complicate refugee youths' integration into mainstream society (Choi, 2011). Adjusting to a significantly different learning then, culture is another challenge. Educated under the strict and regimented North Korean school system, the free and student-centered instructional style that characterizes the South Korean educational system is alien to them (Kim 2009; Together, 2005). Considering these contexts, it is reasonable to determine refugee youth in higher education settings face similar challenges.

A major difference between U.S. schooling and schooling in most Asian societies is the examination-based system. In many Asian countries, education is strongly influenced by the British model: examination-based and highly competitive. A Burmese refugee states that in eighth and tenth standard or grade, Burmese students "have to take [an examination] like SAT" to move to the next level. "To get into medical or engineering school," he explains, "you had to get a high score in tenth grade." Another Burmese interviewee recalls:

I remember [on] one of my first tests in math I got an 80 [out of a possible score of 100]. And I was called into the office by my math teacher [who told me], "Your test result is not very good. You have to try harder." ... They push you because the teacher and the whole class got distinction in the subjects [when a student scores well on the exam]. They take pride in that.

Burmese teachers tutor students during holiday breaks "because the exam is like a prestige thing," a third interviewee notes. "Students are competing. And you are also being pushed [academically] all the time." Teachers know which students "have the potential" to bring distinction on the school with their high scores, says another interviewee. Still another Burmese refugee reflects that U.S. teachers (and professors) may not understand that Burmese students expect their instructors to spend extra time and energy outside of class facilitating their achievement.

Education for understanding should be a crucial component in the education of refugees (Choi 2011). In U.S. college classrooms, students usually are expected to contribute to discussion, engage in debate, work collaboratively in groups, and make oral presentations. Several researchers found refugee students are reluctant to engage in class activities such as discussion and oral presentation due to their unfamiliarity with learner-

centered pedagogy (see, for example, Bloch, 2002; Field, 2005; Morrice, 2009). A Burmese interviewee confirms this finding:

In the classroom, [students are] sitting down and [teachers are] teaching you in the lecture note [system]. The only occasion [for discussion] students have is when we are learning about the Buddha's teaching — when we have a question about what the Buddha says and what [it] really means to human beings.

The successful integration of refugee youth into the mainstream school system must be viewed from a larger perspective of successful integration into host society, which will require the re-imagining of a collective future together (Choi, 2011). Social institutions, especially educational institutions, need to be rearticulated and reorganized to reflect the collective views of both refugees and host society. Equally important is identifying the different psyche of host society and refugee youth that derives from living and being educated in different social systems (Choi, 2011).

Inclusion and Integration

Inclusive representation of refugees in the educational setting may be one way to combat the development of an image of refugee youth as the "Other". More extensive training of refugee youth prior to their entry into the host society may be another step host societies can undertake to more effectively integrate refugee youth. "After the teacher made fun of my ethnicity and the whole class laughed, I did not feel good studying there anymore," states a Burmese refugee. "And my grades [began to] drop."

The testimonies of refugee youth about what happened during their migration helps to give power to the individual experiences and must be heard. Indeed, since the life story, as a representation and interpretation, is a cultural vehicle that allows people to make their individuality visible and enhance their reflexive consciousness, it is vital that the life stories of refugee youths be recognized (Cain 1991; Desjarlais 2000; Middleton & Hewitt 1999; Myerhoff 1982).

Studies emphasize the importance of intergrating families with immigrant and refugee backgrounds in instruction, as well as refugee children's agency in the process of acculturation and development of their new identities. Therefore, Kirova and Adams argue that "Educators can approach the work with these students and their families not from the point of view of deficiency, but from the point of view of building on their already existing strengths" (Kirova & Adams, 2006: 326) in accommodating

“all children’s right to accessible, quality education and for their right to have teachers who are adequately prepared to teach in multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual classrooms (Kirova & Adamas, 2006: 326).

In that sense, educational settings are an ideal location for such enterprises. The voices of refugees communicated to the mainstream population will contribute to the generation of a collective voice and begin the process of a mutual imaging of the future. Forging mutual understanding between refugee youths and host society is of prime importance in order to mend the physical and moral wounds and restore refugee youths’ life trajectory and eventual integration into host society (Choi, 2011).

International Student Characteristics vs. Refugee Student Characteristics

A review of the scholarship on international students indicates that these students — while hailing from different countries — exhibit many characteristics in common. International students usually are among the most intelligent students from their home countries; are highly motivated to achieve academically; and have received training in written and perhaps spoken English in their home countries (Bista, 2011; Constantinides, 1002; Huntley, 1993; Kuo, 2011; Wan, 2001). Refugee students, despite country of origin, also have some characteristics in common. Refugee students usually lack social capital for dealing with the U.S. educational system that is readily available to their U.S.-born peers; experience post-traumatic stress symptoms; have received limited or no English language training in their home countries or in refugee camps; tend either to be highly educated in their home country and unable to find work in the U.S., or else have received limited formal education in their home countries (Bloch, 2002; Field, 2005; Morrice, 2009).

Refugee students’ needs after arriving in the United States are very different from international students’ needs. While refugee students, like international students, may be highly motivated to achieve in school, refugees’ limited school experience coupled with lack of social capital puts them at a distinct disadvantage when compared with international students in U.S. colleges and universities. Similarly, while international students may have arrived in the U.S. with a degree of positive recognition as honor students and with ample financial support, refugee students experience the stigma associated with refugee status and may have great difficulty securing sufficient funds to pay tuition. (See Figures 1 and 2).

Moreover, the diverse educational backgrounds experienced by refugee students prior to resettlement may make the mainstream U.S. educational system seem an alien environment. Schools in refugees' home countries may have been marked by a tradition of competitiveness, including examinations that determine whether one goes on to secondary school or has the opportunity to enter a college program. These schools are in sharp contrast with a public U.S. schooling system that requires all children to attend school until age 16 and expects each child to graduate from high school. Refugee families may have been required to pay for schooling in their home countries, leading some families to support their sons' schooling while neglecting their daughters' formal education. In the United States, both boys and girls have access to publicly supported K-12 instruction. Teachers in refugees' home countries normally are highly respected, second only to one's parents in esteem; while students and parents in the democratic republic known as the United States may be critical of teachers and even behave disrespectfully toward them. Public schools in the U.S. arrange for students to be transported to schools in or near their homes; in many other countries, parents must pay for their children to be transported to school or even pay room and board so their child can attend school in another part of the country.

Teaching styles also differ between the United States and most refugees' home countries. In the United States, the classroom norm is to have a small student:teacher ratio, such as 20:1; in many other countries, the student:teacher ratio is closer to 50:1. In U.S. classrooms, teachers are encouraged to use a variety of instructional techniques; in many other countries, the teaching style is primarily lecture. American students are likely to engage in discussion, debate, or role playing techniques during the school day. They also are likely to have ready access to multiple forms of technology and be expected to use technology as part of the learning process. Students in refugees' home countries, on the other hand, are not exposed to debate or role playing as instructional formats, and they may have little or no experience with instructional technology. The enormous differences in the teaching/learning dynamic between and among countries puts refugee students at a distinct disadvantage compared with their U.S.-born classmates.

Implications of Study Findings on Refugee Education

"The future of education depends on critical analysis of the state of today's education policies and practices makes crucial the debates on

multiculturalism and pluralism both in schools and in the broader society” (Kirova & Adams, 2006: 324).

It is well established that education and school milieu take essential part in facilitating the socialization and acculturation of immigrant children. In schools are where most of a most of culture’s dominant discourse are exchanged, the cultural capital valued in schools may not be equally available to the newcomers who bring another set of cultural convention into the classroom (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The global migration of people and the experiences of refugee students in schools offer glimpses into how ideas, language, social behaviors, and ideologies are translated into educational practices. Refugee students’ responses to mainstream ideologies, as well as their negotiations of cultural and institutional practices, help to inform educators and policy makers. The findings of this study, then, suggest ways educators and policy makers might improve educational practices for populations of refugee students. Particularly, educators and policy makers can act in ways that benefit refugee students by reducing alienation and marginalization of refugee students in educational and social environments and by searching for ways to successfully integrate them into the host society.

Recommendations

It is clear that education system and educators are experiencing various challenges in meeting the needs of all students in their classrooms. The anticipation that global migration trends are likely to continue in the future suggests that changes are needed in teacher preparation programs in order for teachers to provide quality education to all of students, as well as need for continual training of teachers who are already in school systems. In addition, development of appropriate curriculum resources, sufficient funding for students to learn the language of instruction, and adequate academic and psychological counseling services for victims of violence and trauma before they entered in the host country are among the most pressing needs.

In U.S. institutions of higher education, both admissions staff and faculty need to be trained to understand the different needs of international versus refugee college students. Refugee students need access to emotional support and psychological treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms while on campus. Refugee students also have need for assistance with translation of written college admissions materials, assistance during admission and registration processes, culturally sensitive academic advisers, as

well as assistance with transition to the capitalist economic system and mainstream American cultural mores and traditions. Adult refugee students could benefit from a mentoring program set up by individual colleges or universities. Training in general cultural competence and specific instruction targeted toward faculty and staff who deal with large populations of refugee students needs to be scheduled on a regular basis. Moreover, a standardized assessment system for addressing foreign college credit and/or credentials is needed.

More research is needed on U.S. refugee students' college experiences. Plans for intensive transitional classes and/or schools, as well as transitional career advising, would facilitate refugee students' lonely navigation of the current U.S. educational institutional framework. Clearly, more work needs to be done at the federal and state levels to assist refugee resettlement, including experiences with higher education.

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