According to the US High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries."

Each year, by presidential order, the president sets the number of refugees that will enter the US in the coming year.

WHERE ARE REFUGEES ARRIVING FROM?

In fiscal year 2016, about 2% of all refugees arriving to the US came to Massachusetts:充电

WHERE ARE REFUGEES RESETTLING WITHIN THE UNITED STATES?

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Refugee Community

Our Project: We convened 79 WRAF community members to assess interest in and ability to attend citizenship classes. We administered an English literacy level test to individuals at the Basic Individual (e.g., 100 words in 20 minutes) to Advanced Independent (e.g., 100 words in 5 minutes) proficiency level to determine eligibility for citizenship.

Goal:
- To access community interest, availability, and barriers to attending citizenship classes

Outcomes
- 35 of 43 (81%) available for weekend class
- 32 of 43 (74%) available for evening class
- 28 of 43 (65%) available for morning class
- 3 (7%) available Sunday only and 3 available Saturday only

Limitations:
- Transportation: Logistics; child care
- Communication: Limited and varying English language proficiency

Future Work
- House visits to individuals unable to be contacted by phone
- Promoting ESL classes sign up for those with minimal English proficiency
- Beginning offering a citizenship classes on weekends with native Karen and Burmese speakers

Worcester Refugee Resource Needs Assessment Project

Our Project: To create a comprehensive and functional collaborative that would allow for information to be disseminated and exchanged.

Goal:
- Create a needs assessment questionnaire for various stakeholders to assess most used resources and a suitable format for resource collaboratory for the Worcester community

Methods:
- Pilot of the needs assessment was done by administering the needs assessment questionnaire to representatives from WRAF, EMKCHC and ASCE. 
- Administer questionnaire to different stakeholders

Worcester Refugee Resource Collaboratory

Our Project: To create a collaborative that would allow for information to be disseminated and exchanged.

Goal:
- To create a comprehensive and functional collaboratory that would allow for information to be disseminated and exchanged

Methods:
- Collaborate with a group of graduate students at Clark University and the Worcester Public Library, and 74 phone calls with the help of community-based interpreters who also identify as refugees.
- Questionnaire approved for the next steps by representatives in various stakeholder agencies
- Administer questionnaire to different stakeholders

Limitations:
- Time constraints restricted ability to administer questionnaire past the pilot stage

Future Work:
- Continue to administer questionnaire to various stakeholders
- Analyze questionnaire data
- Collaborate with a group of graduate students at Clark University and with Worcester Public Library, by sharing questionnaire and contact directory.
- Use information from survey to create Worcester refugee resource collaboratory
- Follow up with student group or Global health pathway students interested in continuing this work

REFERENCES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Worcester’s Refugee Population and Resources

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WHO IS A REFUGEE?

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is: "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries." Each year, by presidential order, the president sets the number of refugees that will enter the US in the coming year.

WHERE ARE REFUGEES ARRIVING FROM?

WHERE ARE REFUGEES RESETTLING WITHIN THE UNITED STATES?

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON PROBLEMS FACED BY THE REFUGEES?

Self-Sufficiency
- Lack of confidence in self due to language barrier

Social
- Income instability, delay in receiving social security benefits, discrimination at work, bullying in the schools

Psychological/Physical
- Lack of access to care, affordable housing, transportation, difficulty learning English, proper skills required for work, limited resources including lack of food, shelter, healthcare

References:

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