

2020

## Integration of Social Work Practices With Refugees: An Action Research Study

Avril Williams Knox  
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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Avril Knox

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

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An Action Research Study

by

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MSW, Southern University at New Orleans, 1997

BA, Southern University at New Orleans, 1994

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Social Work

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August 2020

## Abstract

The United States is facing an increasing number of refugees and asylees who resettled and were forced to migrate from their countries of origin. In the United States, social service professionals and social workers of resettlement agencies are responsible for the program enrollment and follow-up with newly arrived refugees. Hence, there is a huge learning curve for these individuals. Although a substantial number of refugees are linked to appropriate resources, many are neglected and are unable to sustain themselves. This action research was based upon family systems theory. Integrative techniques used by social workers were explored. The information was subjective, qualitative research used to uncover the trends of social work practice with refugee migration. A focus group was conducted, consisting of 8 social workers. Participants were recruited by email, telephone calls, and face-to-face contact. The focus group participants unanimously agreed their efforts for compliance in integration services were adequate. They all agreed that the lack of literacy in the refugee's first language made the integration services difficult; however, the services for education, employment, housing, healthcare, and advocacy were visible. The findings may be used to assist refugee service organizations in selecting appropriate staff for their refugee programs and for staff development.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study and Literature Review

### **Foundation of the Study**

Refugees are displaced individuals who flee their countries because of war, fear of persecution, or social conflict (United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2017). These individuals are forced to flee and are unable to return to their countries of origin. Before 2017, there were 65.6 million persons forced to find a new home (UNHCR, 2017). Of this number, only 22.5 million individuals registered as refugees (UNHCR, 2017). Refugee resettlement is often described as a unique humanitarian effort that requires partnership between the resettlement agencies and the United States government.

International social work involves the implementation of services that assist with social issues in various countries. Refugee resettlement is a service that is rendered to individuals fleeing their countries of origin. Initial migration was after World War II and became the face of the United States humanitarian efforts. The United States is one of the largest refugee resettlement countries in the world (UNHCR, 2017). Individuals seek refuge in various global countries. Serving refugees since the 1970s, the United States became the leaders of the refugee resettlement (UNHCR, 2013). Migrants do not have the privilege to choose their country of origin (UNHCR, 2013) and consult with states to identify placement sites before the stringent vetting process. Once the government agrees to the placement, the individuals are placed in the jurisdiction of a local resettlement agency. Zong and Batalova (2017) reported the United States accepted nearly 85,000

refugees. The ceiling is presently capped at 45,000 refugees to be resettled (see Figure 1). Currently, Texas is the top resettlement state in the United States. California stands as number two in the charts (see Figure 2). Nine National Voluntary Resettlement Agencies (Church World Service, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, and World Relief) throughout the United States (including those in California and Texas) are responsible for caring for these individuals and offering the assurance of independence (US Department of State, 2016). Refugee resettlement agencies are funded through various governmental streams of funding, including the Department of State, Population and Refugee Migration (State Department- PRM), the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The reception and placement programs are solely responsible for the acclimation of the integrated applications for up to 6 months. Care for the refugees can be followed for 1 year, and other resources can be allowed for up to 5 years post-arrival to the United States (Darrow, 2015). English as a second language (ESL), employment, job placement, civics classes, citizenship and naturalization, an intensive case management program, an older refugee program (for individuals 65 years and older), and a refugee cash assistance program are resources that are available for 5 years of the resettlement process. Other resources

include the social integration program (case management) and the refugee medical assistance program. These programs are resources that aim to support and drive economic self-sufficiency.

### **Problem Statement**

Social workers are at the forefront of aiding refugees (International Federation of Social Workers, 2015). In the United States, social service professionals and social workers of resettlement agencies are responsible for program enrollment and follow-up with newly arrived refugees (Limestone College, 2016). An integrated program can simultaneously address economic support that will help the refugee achieve self-sufficiency and strengthen families as a part of the holistic approach (National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, 2017). There is a need for social workers in the United States to learn integration techniques to lead the refugees toward self-sufficiency in their new environments.

Asylees and refugees who resettled to the United States after being forced to migrate from their countries of origin, due to conflicts in Africa, Asia, and Europe increased significantly (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Although a substantial number of cases are linked to appropriate resources, individuals are often neglected and are unable to sustain themselves (Matlin, Depoux, Schutte, Flahault, & Saso, 2018). Inadequate information exists about how social workers in an urban setting in Texas understand and

employ integration strategies when working with refugees (Popescu & Libal, 2018).

Through this study, I will seek to fill this gap in practice knowledge.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The goal of this qualitative research study is to explore the integrative techniques used by social workers who provide services to refugees in the United States. A research question that reflects the research study is: How does the exploration of integration-related practices impact self-sufficiency amongst refugees in the United States? The sub-questions are as follows:

- What are the goals and expectations of refugees migrating to the United States?
- How should the integration of refugee services be measured through language development, employment success, and economic stability?
- Are there any specific practices or coordination of services that lead to improved outcomes for refugees?
- What tools of practice prepare practitioners to serve newly arrived refugees?
- What successful approaches can be followed to educate social workers before assisting refugees?

### **Nature of the Doctoral Project**

Problems identified in social work practice are associated with the integration of social work practices with refugees migrating to the United States. As a refugee host society, the term *integration* is frequently used. Integration is used when the community

embraces refugees, offering welcoming social services, so they become successful in their new environment (Kallick & Mathema, 2016). For example, society provides refugees with the tools needed to successfully advance in the workforce, offering classes where refugees learn the English language well, and assists them with acquiring home ownership.

Successful integration will encompass skills for cultural competency amongst the social workers providing the services. Skills for social workers working with refugees include the ability to promote an environment where differences and similarities are explored. Integration is successful when social workers becomes allies to refugees who experience discrimination and prejudice and become the gatekeeper of discussions when unpredictable situations arise. The attitudes refugees encounter is due to the behaviors of those that display negatively based on the population's differences (Ford, 2016). This behavior demonstrates a sense of oppression and can lower the refugee's level of confidence and self-esteem. Another example of a similar case of discrimination is categorizing a group of people by assuming they intend to harm society. Lawmakers within the United States manipulated the refugee resettlement process by linking security fears to Muslim refugees. Due to the fear of the lawmakers, the refugee admissions to the United States has decreased by ninety-four percent in one year (Ford, 2016). The Syrian population has reduced admissions by nearly 100% due to this concern (Ford, 2016).

Refugees are led towards independence by being given adequate tools to navigate the community, which is the objective of integrative services (Capp, 2015). Integration,

as an art, allows the social worker to implement proper programs that will encourage the refugees to seek opportunities that will enhance their growth (i.e., education, employment, and financial stability). These integrated services for refugees become an issue when there is a lack of training and a lack of understanding of the needs of individuals or refugee families. Professionals who are privileged to work with this population of people should also be trained in cultural orientation, cultural diversity, and cultural compassion (Hardy, 2016). Cultural competency skills and abilities will assist the social workers to better serve the clients, with the intent to ensure independence and the acclimation to their new environments (Hardy, 2016).

### **Significance of the Study**

Findings of the study will help to maximize initiatives to support, welcome, and empower refugees in their new communities. Results of the study may instill confidence and hope that will encourage refugees to advocate for themselves and other refugees. Communities will gain the capacity for growth with stakeholder and community support. An emphasis is placed on those with low educational skills and little to no English language skills (Capps et al., 2015). Economic integration reflects the country's kindness to the newly arrived refugees. Successful integration practices contributed to the economic prosperity of families (McHugh, Tobocman, & Wilson, 2015). Support for the refugee community by social workers increased significantly (Hardy, 2016). Hence, this study will assess the challenges social workers face when working with refugees during the integration process and will explore the necessary skills needed to facilitate services

in the refugee resettlement organizations and other refugee service providers within the United States. Agencies and the social work practice across the country can adopt evidence-based practices that can offer better service to the refugee community.

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

Murray Bowen's family systems theory was developed in the 1950s (Haefner, 2014). Bowen studied the structure, the complexity, and organization of the relationship of the family. For years, family theorist discovered patterns to make such conclusions. The theory explores the history of the family and of those within the family. The method can be utilized on individuals and families (Haefner, 2014).

Haefner (2014) reported family systems theory has two therapies, which include structural and family therapies. Throughout history, the structural theory is associated with Salvador Minuchin. Minuchin and Nichols (1998) stated structural family therapy focuses on the structure of the family and the context of the family. This therapy consists of beliefs related to the family's hierarchy. For example, many cultures consider the grandparents and parents leaders of the families. Hence, if the grandparents and parents are not present, the oldest of the siblings become the hierarchy of the family.

As a practice, Minuchin and Nichols (1998) would encourage family disorganization, in efforts to have families rebuild their relationships. On the contrary, Bowen's (1950) family system theory consists of families that operate as an individual; individuals within the family still acknowledge themselves as an individual family

member. These family members are reported to function psychologically and emotionally separately (Minuchin & Nichols, 1998)

According to Bowen's (1950) family systems theory, individuals cannot be solely understood as individuals. Individuals must be recognized as part of a family, as the family is an emotional unit (Kerr, 2017). Family systems theory applies to the integration of social work practices by explaining behavior within a logical context of community and family systems (von Schlippe & Frank, 2013). An application of cultural competence with family systems theory will recognize the traditional cultures and traditional values of its families (Garcia, 2016). This approach will be used to identify the challenges social workers encounter when working with refugees, and it will detect the skills needed for integration. Peer support is also an approach that is used to better assist a refugee (Shaw, 2014). Strategies that involve the social worker's ability to link the refugee to services, such as education and employment, are needed. In addition to this strategy, social workers will house them in communities that welcome refugee resettlement and later teach them of ways to advocate for themselves. These strategies are coupled with peer involvement in the service. People integrate successfully, which includes the navigation of resources.

### **Professional and Academic Literature**

Problems in international social work involve the integration of social work practices with refugees migrating to the United States. The study addresses the skills and tools needed by social workers to serve the refugee community better. In efforts to help

the refugee efficiently, there must be a connection between the international social workers and the refugee resettlement communities. Enhancing the skills of those who assist refugees with these integrated services is the purpose of the action research. Thought processes for themes related to the study are derived through the literature review process. Each topic of these themes was explored. As a result, the scholarly resources were assessed for best and evidence-based practices using PsycArticles, including PsycINFO, Social work Abstracts, and PubMed through EBSCO and the Walden University Library databases. In the search for related scholarly articles, various keywords that referenced refugees were amongst those searched. These words included *refugee resettlement, cultural competency, cultural diversity, cultural sensitivity, integration, cultural ecogram, social work roles in refugee resettlement, social work ethics, international social worker, multiculturalism, acculturation, assimilation, adaptation, resettlement, evidence-based practices of social workers working with refugees, refugee education, refugee employment, refugee health care, refugee housing, and refugee advocacy*. Other words used in the vital search included *social work practice, economic growth, self-sufficiency, approach, and strategies*. Articles reviewed included information on *the integration of refugees, the inclusion of refugee communities, and the integration outcomes of refugees*.

Problems of migration were described as psychosocial and socioeconomic anxieties (Segal & Mayadas, 2005). Many issues are elucidated as miscommunication and inadequacy. Areas of concern consist of the differences within the sociocultural well-

being of both the refugee and the resettlement country. It is essential the refugee family is thoroughly assessed for resources that reflect the need for cultural and economic integration. Social workers are expected to offer realistic goals and assist the refugee with accomplishing these goals as a continuum of care effort.

### **Refugee Resettlement Goals and Expectations**

Goals of a resettlement agency are to provide cultural orientation and assist the refugees in becoming self-sustaining citizens in America. Expectations of the Department of State are to produce self-reliant individuals who are willing to seek educational opportunities, employment, and other services that will meet their own needs (US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2016). To ensure these expectations are met, the US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (2016) recommended several evidence-based practices. One evidence-based practice was the development and use of a new model to coordinate services, which include short-term planning, parallel services, internationally led services, and refugee interest groups. This idea was practical because it allowed stakeholders of the refugee community to get involved and serve according to the consistent need of the areas of resettlement (Capps et al., 2015). Other practices include building the capacity for host governments. The effectiveness of the capacity building allowed the government and its stakeholders to take on the responsibility for managing the refugee crisis while seeking solutions to community responses (Burrows & Ramic, 2017).

International social workers must demonstrate the ability to communicate solutions to various political differences and political parties around the world. As there has been a demand for international social workers, any interested individual must undergo specific training involving cultural competence and diversity. Training must be related to a cultural and professional development group. Van Selm (2013) conducted a survey of the staff of UNHCR to find a strategic use of resettlement practices. This study offered insight to social workers on strategies that can be utilized in the field of refugee resettlement.

Regarding local integration, one approach was for staff to involve government officials in the refugee process. Although all officials will not agree to the terms of resettlement, the officials will gain an awareness of the potential implementation of services. Goals of this undertaking are to create productive discussions and support for future implementation of services.

The United States developed ways to increase refugee integration. Coordinated efforts through the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), and the nine affiliate resettlement agencies are all dedicated to resettling refugees in communities across the country (Mathema, 2018). Affordable housing and access to social and physical infrastructure was the commitment of the United States (Urban Agenda, 2018). Like the United States, Europe has similar expectations when seeking refugee integration. Some resettlement organizations seek partnerships with a clear action plan (Jakuleviciene & Bileisis, 2016).

Although the progression of integration is in various stages of acceptance, countries in Europe promoted the perception of positive resettlement efforts and services (Jakuleviciene & Bileisis, 2016). Urban Agenda (2018) studied the cooperation of urban and rural cities regarding refugees. Consequently, the conclusion of this study emphasized the cultural, social, and economic contributions to the city's life, through refugee resettlement and integration (Jakuleviciene & Bileisis, 2016).

### **Integration Measurements**

Berry (1997), a social psychologist, defined integration as a process whereby an individual maintains interest in the original culture while exploring interest and interactions of self and with others. Darrow (2015) also described integration as the process of social inclusion. Integration builds active economic communities and allows for cultural and social growth. Refugee integration focuses on their interconnectedness with the community as a new arrival. Integration is successful when the refugee achieves the fullest potential towards success as an American, when the refugee considers self as a contribution to the community, and when the refugee accesses services independently. Integration is an ongoing process. Migrants will adapt to the lifestyle of Americans, without losing their own culture. Social service providers have the responsibility to introduce the refugee with the hope of finding a welcoming community. The provider is the liaison between the client and the public. They are the link to assuring cultural diversity and competency is well-respected (Garran & Rozas, 2013). According to the US Department of Health & Human Services (2017), cultural competence is the willingness

to assist clients in meeting their needs, with the consideration of their ethnic backgrounds. Hendricks (2009) reported the expectations of a social worker through the NASW Code of Ethics as a resource. Ethical standard guidelines suggest social workers are empathetic and considerate of all individuals' culture, beliefs, and values (National Association of Social Workers, 2017). Social service providers also assist newly arrived refugee with feelings of hope and belonging (UNHCR, 2013). Functional indicators such as education, employment, and economic stability are all benchmarks to assist social workers or social service providers in measuring successful integration (Darrow, 2015).

The goal of the US federal resettlement policy is for refugees to become self-sufficient quickly. Most refugees integrate within 10 years. In other cases, they become citizens in 20 years (Kallick & Mathema, 2016). Although the acclimation is expected suddenly and is eventually transformed, there still seems to be a learning curve for social service providers. Capps et al. (2015) reported some successes and indicated some challenges. Although many refugees acclimate well, others struggle with educational attainment. There are gender gaps in educational achievement. Amongst the ethnic groups, progress varies. Reciprocity of the education system or the academic degrees earned in the country of origin may not equate to the degree of quality in the United States. Therefore, the social service providers must have knowledge of the reciprocity process and must possess the skills to encourage and empower the refugee in moving forward. Dyssegaard and Mathema (2016) conveyed research that indicates refugees who speak the language of the resettlement country tend to advance in employment quicker.

Those with language barriers tend to be overqualified in their new positions. It is the responsibility of the social service provider to find resources to assist with education to advance in various language and employment opportunities.

One of the best practices of integration of refugees is governance involvement (McHugh et al., 2015). This method is policy driven and will build a better processing strategy to fully integrate refugees. The White House Task Force on New Americans (2015) assisted with the integration of refugees and immigrants by reviewing the policies of all executive departments and agencies. Actions of 16 federal agencies and offices throughout the United States were involved.

According to Tobocman (2015), WE Global Network: Welcoming America is the agency's initiative to create collaborations for economic growth and opportunities for refugees and businesses in the local area. It envisions refugees as the community that can demonstrate economic competition and make the refugee contributions socially attractive. Tobocman viewed refugees as assets and described their input as a win/win situation. Refugees need resources to succeed. Businesses need the refugees to occupy positions that enhance and drive their economic growth.

A holistic approach to strengthen the social network and introduce relationships is utilized by staff at the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services agency (Wilson, 2015). Efforts are emphasized to connect government and non-profit organizations to succeed in the workplace. Promoting economic and employment integration is the intent. Another recommendation for economic integration is to include financial literacy,

housing, business administration practices, and human capital efforts. This approach involves language skills, education, and training (McHugh et al., 2015). Because of this research through the Migration and Policy Institute, the State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration was advised to increase the assessment for trained support for social workers and caseworkers. Training was to support initiatives on education persistence and success from a federal perspective (McHugh et al., 2015). The State Department was also encouraged to assess refugees' training levels before the resettlement period. This practice was to offer the service providers a better plan for placement services (US Department of State, 2016).

### **Coordination of Social Work**

Interest in international social work increased over the years. Many social workers who are interested in working with ethnic groups tend to leave the United States and work in capacities to aid individuals abroad. Refugee resettlement offers the profession the opportunity to serve in the United States while assisting migrants. Working with refugees is a specialized position (Kelly, 2017). Service is more than likely facilitated by a social worker who has an interest in multiculturalism. Social workers should be skilled in working with those that are consistently confronted by frustrating public behaviors that may become barriers to the client's care. There are also linguistic challenges, socioeconomic stressors, psychological responses to trauma, and the apprehension of refugee services by lawmakers (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). Research practice used to assist in this study is the orientation of social workers. Subjects discussed are policies

concerning refugees and the development of systems that will assist in client care and service delivery. Uses of the pan-cultural approach help to meet the needs of displaced individuals (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002).

Björn, Jarkman, Sydsjö, and Berterö (2013) conducted a study and utilized the family systems theory when working with individuals and families from Bosnia who were resettled away from their home countries. The research involved three family therapy sessions per family with a total of nine courses conducted. Thirteen families were targeted. However, only 11 participated. The researchers explored the refugees' lives before, during, and after their resettlement. Studies were conducted by health professionals including social workers. Refugee families in the community were offered services. The concept of family therapy was to support the family by providing options and resources to make their transition smooth. Social service professionals aimed at what worked before resettlement and allowed for the alternative reasoning of what could potentially assist with the change in their new environment. While conducting the family systems approach, the social workers specifically included interpreters, who were present throughout the intervention process. Although some members of the family spoke English, the social worker wanted the communication to be clear, concise, and verbatim to the topics of discussion. Key findings of the study suggested multifaceted discussion when working with refugees. It is recommended the family tell their stories so that social workers obtain a clear picture of the need for services (Björn et al., 2013). Family therapy

became stronger while coping with the complexity of their issues. Allowing the family to become acclimated to their new environment as a cohesive family unit is a philosophy.

Moreover, service providers must research their client's background before serving them (Björn et al., 2013). Through intake and other exploration techniques, this knowledge will aid the social worker with insight that will allow for better support of the refugee. This process is needed to determine a successful plan. Postmigration may involve the dissipation of culture, barriers to the languages upon resettlement, the inability to adjust to laws of the new country, and the reception of regulations of education and employment. These aspects of refugee resettlement can alter successful integration. It was determined that social workers could evaluate and explore possible counseling and support efforts. Some refugees have traumatic experiences that affect their ability to change. Circumstances are related to the effects of war and other conflicts that may predispose their thought processes. Ethical consideration of this research allowed participants to discontinue the counseling sessions at any time. Practitioners must not focus solely on traumatic experiences; it may hinder the conversations throughout the research (Björn et al., 2013). Emphasis should be placed on the new life experiences within the new environment. Strategies that have assisted social workers in the refugee integration process can be qualitative and used as semistructured surveys (Bartkeviciene & Raudeliunaite, 2013). Interviews revealed several social issues including financial deficits, legal access, housing, and employment. Experts in the study utilized skills that mirrored micro, mezzo, and macro level interventions. Best practices of these social

workers included emotional and psychological support, the formation of a social network, and the organization of social activities. Concepts of self-directed learning were the primary focus (Bartkeviciene, 2010).

When social workers use self-directed learning with refugees, it is best to utilize informal and non-informal leaning systems. Using this practice, the focus of knowledge is on the learning participant. Refugees can process personal learning without the help of others. With this method, the learner analyzes his values and acquires the ability to make decisions. Empirically-based practices should be used when working with refugees (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). This concept entails monitoring the intervention and uses research methods to obtain a precise definition of the client's problem. Competent cultural practice is the foundation when working with refugees. Social workers must include program evaluation activities in their training with the refugee clients (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002). It is imperative that the social work practice is evaluated to disseminate findings in order to acquire professional knowledge of what works best for this client base (Potocky-Tripodi, 2002).

### **Social Work and Refugee Rights**

Social workers play an important role when working with refugees and legal issues. Haider (2015) referenced the National Association of Social Workers, suggesting social workers possess the necessary tools on immigration policies when working as an international social worker. Service providers must understand and know the rights of the refugee to offer their clients trust and knowledge that will prevent fear. Practitioners

should research and comprehend policies related to employer exploitation, child abuse, law enforcement regulations, and domestic violence policies (Haider, 2015). Many of these laws are practiced differently in refugees' homelands. Therefore, the social worker must be aware of the rules to distinguish and teach the differences to the client.

### **Tools for Social Workers**

When working with refugees, the need to capture information and assess backgrounds is pertinent. To better serve the refugee community, there are several tools to simplify the task of collecting data. One device is the culturagram (Singer, 2008) and tools to obtain refugee data related to the family's background and culture (Congress, 2017). Social workers use cultural ecograms to evaluate an individual's behavioral content. These tools detect disparities in the refugee community and allow the social worker to integrate culture in the clinical practice (Yasui, 2015). When conflict arises, there is potential discomfort for the client. This often happens when the social worker illustrates a lack of understanding of the client's needs (Huey & Pan, 2010). Ecograms assist with the treatment plan and the outcome measurements. According to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (2017) cultural competency and congruency practices contribute to the effectiveness of the service delivery and treatment. If at any point a social worker is unclear of the role of an international social worker, the NASW cultural competence indicators can be followed. Cultural competence indicators assess the achievement of the cultural competence standards of the National Association of Social Workers (Simmons, Diaz, Jackson, & Takahashi, 2007).

Another interesting tool that assists researchers in data collection when working with refugees is Digital Storytelling (DST) (Lenette, Cox, & Brough, 2013). This process is guided through ethnographic research. Ethnographic research is the process of recording a culture to gain a better understanding of the population in which is served (Lenette et al., 2013). Digital recordings assist the researcher with an actual story of the participant's experience in working with the refugee client. Actual services, expectations, and results through digital storytelling tell a humanistic story.

Moreover, the tools that assist social workers with adult clients have been deemed effective (Clemons, 2014). A tool that has been used when working with families with children is the Culturally Enhanced Video Feedback Engagement (CEVE). Yasui and Wakschlag (2015) suggested using the CEVE to coordinate minority children with disruptive behaviors. Mental health needs of refugees are often neglected (Walker, 2005). Hence, a culturally competent model is one solution that can assist social service professionals holistically by utilizing various social work principles. With increased conflicts in the world, the need for refugee resettlement is great. To better understand refugees, social workers and other professionals must recognize the need for cultural competency. Understanding the refugee requires the implementation of a needs assessment. This process can be implemented through a community focus group that will explore approaches to better practices.

### **Successful Integration Practices**

Refugee resettlement has become politically charged across the globe. According to UNHCR (2019), refugees have become a conversation that includes negativity and lack of respect. President Donald Trump and his administration initiated a shift in the refugee administration. A refugee travel ban was recently implemented thereby affecting the travel of many refugees. Jacobsen (2014) suggested that the most crucial time for social workers working with refugees is today. Jacobsen also discussed the need for social workers to understand and support existing refugees who recently traveled. Case studies explored the economic impact of the housing market, the employment services, healthcare, and the education programs; responses from the community were examined. Social workers have become advocates for the treatment of refugees and their families. Social workers should possess the necessary tools to assist refugees, including referring to humanitarian efforts of those around the world (UNHCR, 2019). According to the NASW (2019), it is the responsibility of the social worker to emphasize the art of social science. These services start by offering comprehensive services that consistently comprise the communities. An ethical environment that revolves around human rights, social justice, and respect consists of inclusion.

Although the model of integration has been around for as long as resettlement, it has not been viewed as an approach for research. Despite community controversies within some of the regions in the United States, there are successful practices in refugee resettlement. An advantageous method of preparation is to train care providers how to

prepare for the refugee client adequately. Partnerships and resources in the community indicate success (Burrows & Ramic, 2017). Working toward self-sufficiency through education and learned behaviors is the purpose of integration efforts. One approach often used by social workers is the strengths-based approach. This method helps to guide and teach the refugees real life skills. In this process, the social worker links the refugee to the community managers and leaders, hoping to empower the client. As the client becomes confident, the building of a healthy relationship with stakeholders becomes evident. Care providers coordinate and connect with federal agencies overseas to gain data regarding resettlement needs (Brown & Scribner, 2014). Refugees tend to become self-sufficient in a short time (Dyssegaard, 2016). Due to the cultural orientation offered overseas (before travel) and the orientation upon arrival, refugees are willing and ready to work. Through excitements to start a new life, most refugees work harder than the average American, proving their proper diligence and appreciation for a fresh start (Dyssegaard, 2016).

Worabo (2016) conducted four focus groups with refugees that outlined themes toward favorable practices. Refugee focus groups included individuals from Bhutan, Eritrea, Iraq, and Somalia. One issue that was identified is the need for cultural competency training. This training would enhance the knowledge of service providers within the refugee resettlement agencies. Findings were identified and related to integrity and related cultural issues. Worabo discovered that providers did not understand their culture and ethical background. Staff implemented service plans on experiences that were unrelated to those of a refugee. Due to the disconnections from the resettlement agencies,

refugees did not understand the plan of care and did not trust service providers' decisions. Therefore, the level of care failed, there was an immense miscommunication of services, and refugees were dissatisfied. Best practice regarding cultural competency for social workers requires providing support through a resettlement agency and to research the populations further to be served.

On the other hand, Valtonen (2008) suggested social workers be creative when working with refugees and the resettlement efforts. Valtonen used the culturally sensitive approach as the theoretical approach. Whipple, Hall, and Sustaita (2015) reported cultural sensitivity skills are needed to serve refugees effectively. In efforts to obtain outcomes, this skill was highly recommended by this team of researchers. The ability to interact with the refugees will offer factual finding in the refugees' background that will be useful in the assessments. It is stated that acquiring this skill is essential to sustaining the prestige and integrity of the social work profession.

Shaw (2014) conducted a study where former refugees were working as caseworkers to assist the professional social workers. This philosophy helps the social worker concentrate on therapeutic communication and counseling, where the aid became a stress reliever from language barriers and compromised cultural integrity. Caseworkers are trained to assist with basic service needs and report the requirements to the social worker. As a team, a comprehensive plan of care is implemented. These staff offer interpretation services, modeling, peer support, and other tasks associated with integration as added support. In the study, nine former refugees were interviewed for the position.

The job was to serve as a liaison between the community and the social worker. Agency workers, such as caseworkers, were known as the bridge builders and advocates. They were either full-time or part-time employees with a resettlement agency. Three years was the maximum tenure of these staff. Case samples used were age and ethnicity. Variations of the sample included working in the United States over a period of 10 years. Self-exploration is the best way to describe the experiences of the caseworkers in this study. Dubus (2015) also suggested utilizing former refugees for social work interventions. It was recommended to partner with former refugees as interpreters to assist with assessments, support groups, and other social service needs.

Wahlbeck (2011) also discussed the process of integration of migrants to a new country. The study emphasized the theoretical approaches of social workers, in working with various refugee populations. Acculturation, assimilation, and multiculturalism were the concepts used for the analysis. These concepts were the mere adaptation of behaviors and cultures of people from another culture. The cultures are merged to bring about social patterns of an individual (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanaga, & Szapocznik, 2010). According to Schwartz et al. (2010), the social worker must allow the refugee client the option of biculturalism. This method will enable refugees to keep their own culture and beliefs while receiving cultures from the resettled country. Both collective and individual values can be used to identify self within the United States. Hence, assimilation is the act of acquiring the habits and attitudes of the receiving country. Social workers must practice understanding this concept.

In many cases, refugees have difficulties with assimilation. Those who are having difficulties with adjusting to their new community should be placed in environments to obtain positive role models from those that have experienced the same journey (Pauls, 2018). On the contrary, multiculturalism is the combination of all groups, including religion, race, and cultural behaviors. This pattern of thinking demonstrates the style of communication of many individuals that may cross the paths of social workers. Social workers should practice multiculturalism, where all refugees will experience the feeling of inclusion, love, and belonging (Chu, 2016).

There are traditional adaptation methods for refugees in the United States as a means of detachment from the home country (Ives, 2017). Hence, through the acculturation method, there are other options for adaptation. Social workers teach the acculturation process, which strengthens the ability to move forward in integrating with the community. If the refugee is committed to transformation, the refugee must participate in the culture of the host country in efforts to fully incorporate. Aside from the positive aspects of integration, the social worker must be committed to guiding the refugee through factors that may be discouraging, such as discrimination. Each refugee would have to decide to withstand the community's rejection of refugee resettlement. Understanding the term discrimination is critical and learning how to surpass the refutation is more perilous. Therefore, the social worker must learn to recognize and initiate transparency. They will also be expected to de-escalate situations that may not be favorable to the refugee and the refugee admissions process.

Successful refugee integration attempts should be carefully monitored. If not careful, the social worker could provide the refugee with information that is not useful or relevant to their situation, thereby providing little to no assistance or service. Given there is a mass of ethnic groups resettled, the social worker must relate to each one in her community, within the United States. Lee, Choi, Proulx, and Cornwell (2015) found it necessary to conduct a study on Burmese refugees. As expected, the researchers initiated the investigation with the literature on the Burmese culture and their ethical background. The study exposed many ethnic groups from the Burmese country. This discovery was a learning curve for social workers unfamiliar with individuals from this group. Social workers were educated at this time about the need for interpretation in various languages as opposed to the assumed one language. Facts indicate that although individuals are from the same country, they possess different languages and different beliefs. This study presented validation of the exploration of people from various places. Integration cannot be implemented if the people are misunderstood.

A program that encompasses a research center that involves the integration of new Americans was established by the University of Utah's College of Social Work, *The Center for Research Integration on Migration & Refugee Integration*. It is an academic program that coordinates and collaborates with local researchers to explore outreach efforts (University of Utah, 2016). Through internships and volunteerism, the university achieves outcomes that will strengthen the refugee community. Students and volunteers who have not worked with refugees are offered opportunities to mentor the individuals

and families. According to Burrow (2017), disciplines such as social work, social welfare, psychology, and allied health are amongst those that intern with refugee programs. As a volunteer or an intern, the objective is to help the refugees better navigate the community.

The case study of Darrow (2015) suggested various social work implications. It was recommended that the key to practical social work is by securing quality housing, with positive rapport with the property management team. Hence, other efforts were found to be successful when the social workers were adequately trained and prepared to facilitate services regarding issues related to resettlement. On the other hand, Darrow suggested social work administration should exercise the expansion of programming by seeking diversified funding sources to withstand the recently slow arrival trends.

Perceptions of effective social work practices involve the skills of empowerment. Efficacy is a key to an intended outcome (Soliman & Miah, 2011). Empowerment skills will offer the social worker training that will assist in community changes. With the will to achieve results at full potential, the social worker will learn to encourage his or her clients. It will primarily provide the refugee with structure. A structure will allow for adequate training and education upon arrival. Health professionals are expected to accentuate capacity building and self-reliance to assure self-sufficiency and independence. Hence, to master these goals, the social worker is advised to upgrade one's skills referencing the trending programs in refugee resettlement. While it is essential to train the refugee, the social worker is required to gain knowledge that will help in

contributing successful therapeutic outcomes, which includes continuing education for the professional.

### **Successful Integration Practices with Children**

When working with refugee children, there can be many obstacles that may become complex if interventions are not implemented correctly. Hence, social service providers are amongst the professional that can efficiently serve those that are excluded and vulnerable. Refugee children are likely to be the victims of discrimination, oppression, and considered as disadvantaged in school systems and their neighborhoods (Okitikpi & Aymer, 2003). Children are more likely to stand out as the different child. A child refugee may not experience the same hardships as the adult refugees. Hence, their issues are different. Refugee children often experience despair, depression, and confusion regarding their future conditions. Post-traumatic stress is prevalent, although in most cases post-traumatic stress may go unnoticed in children. Some symptoms are observable and include flashbacks and sleep disturbances (Yule, 1998).

A study consisting of children with psychosocial factors that influence their mental health were observed and assisted by social workers utilizing their skills within their profession (Okitikpi, 2003). The study consisted of 35 social workers and various organizations. Implementing good social work practices that would further serve refugee children effectively is the purpose of the research. Services rendered to refugee children, their needs, and their family's needs were explored.

Okitikpi (2003) conducted a study to assess the need of individuals for a well-rounded orientation before the resettlement to a new country. It was also determined that some children could benefit from a psychosocial assessment to evaluate their emotional state of mind. The downfall of working with children is the inability to communicate with the children and their families adequately. Children often spoke minimally, they did not want to keep in contact with the social worker, and they were guarded when interacting. Hence, the social workers still maintained a relationship with them in effort to keeping the lines of communication open. It is crucial for social workers to stay abreast of the children's cases by forming professional consultations with teachers, principals, school counselors, and the parents. Therefore, if the student is ever in need, the relationship with the social worker would be present (Yule, 1998).

Individual needs of refugee children must be assessed. Biological, psychological, and social factors play an essential role in a high-income country such as the United States when considering integration. Many refugee children live in low-income environments and are often deprived of the necessary tools to care for themselves. These circumstances place the refugee child in a disadvantaged situation due to the various barriers that are inherited as a refugee. Research to assist refugee children is limited. Limitations are solely ineffective due to consent issues with the parents. However, the most efficient tool for integration includes the use of art and drama therapy (Fezal & Betancourt, 2017).

## **Social Work and Ethics**

Nearly 39,000 Muslims resettled to the United States in 2016 (McCleary & Simmelink, 2017). This number was the record high for refugee admissions for Muslims. It was a time when many anti-Muslim activists were protesting Muslim resettlement. However, social workers were encouraged to not participate in this political engagement. Ethically, the social worker is to care for the vulnerable individuals, including refugees. They are expected to morally support the emotional and social well-being of an individual. While implementing ethical and professional practices, the social worker is to engage as an advocate.

Psychiatric care is against the belief of several ethnicities in many countries (Björn & Björn, 2004). These beliefs make it difficult when providing treatment to the refugees. Therefore, it is the known responsibility of the social worker to provide a safe place to communicate the treatment plan cautiously. Every social worker must understand the differences in the refugee culture, versus the culture within the United States. Knowledge of other cultures should be evident. Socio-economic background, religion, norms, and values should be assessed and should pose an ethical practice during the treatment. Social workers must familiarize themselves with culturally sensitive values of all clients (Björn & Björn, 2004). NASW Code of Ethics (2015) stated the social worker must act and advocate for any individual displaced by violent conflicts and war, including refugees. Ethical statements through NASW obligates the social worker to assist any

population in need of resettlement, to assist in enhancing their well-being through methods of integration (NASW, 2015).

### **Summary**

Refugees are displaced away from their countries of origin (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2017). Countries throughout the world are identified, including the once world's largest resettlement country, the United States. As these refugees seek stability, the U.S. government expects them to become self-sufficient (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2017). Becoming self-sufficient depends upon the guidance of the resettlement organization. Hence, social workers drive this field of transition. Integrated social work practices with the refugee are the starting point for the implementation of service (Papademetriou, 2017). An integrated program to better assist refugees needs to strengthen families (Papademetriou, 2017). In the attempt to connecting refugees to their communities, the coordination of advocacy, empowerment, education, and employment efforts through social workers must be considered (Capps, 2015). By being linked to these resources, the refugee is more likely to succeed (Papademetriou, 2017). Social workers are trained experts to facilitate resources that will empower refugees to act on behalf of themselves, exercising their independence (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). With these resources as a new guide to their new environment, the refugee can be fully equipped to live a successful life, with substantial means (Capps, 2015).

The sole purpose of this research is to identify techniques for social workers, that will help to provide substantial care to the refugees. Migration Policy Institute (2017)

advised integration to ensure clients acknowledge their barriers and understand their needs better. Social work professionals can work in various capacities while assisting with healing the vulnerable and hurting people. Many refugees speak several languages. They may speak the language that is used in their country of origin and other languages spoken in the regional areas from which they fled. A best practice was hiring former refugees to work closely with the social workers, as case workers (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). A collaboration of services allows the social worker to focus on the theoretical framework and counseling, while the caseworker translates and interprets. Team effort offers the refugee cultural and linguistic familiarity and it allows for a smooth transition into multi-services.

To better serve refugees, the National Association of Social Workers (2009) suggested that social workers acquire skills in cultural competency, cultural diversity, and cultural sensitivity. Adhering to evidence-based practices that utilize these skills allows the social worker to grow with the understanding of their client, the client's background, and the issues that were frequently faced in the client's original homeland. Moreover, the literature review exposed various techniques to assist social workers, when working with refugees. Governance involvement is a key to a successful integration (McHugh et al., 2015). Advocating through lawmakers is vital when this group is more than likely responsible for future programming. Educating the officials on refugee resettlement will increase the chances of further or future funding. Introducing the advocacy efforts also

increase the networking opportunities, by connecting the non-profit agencies with governmental organizations.

Referencing a theoretical framework offers better service to the refugee. To accommodate the needs of the families, the researcher chose to reference the family systems theory (Haefner, 2015). Given that family systems theory is often related to recognizing traditional cultures and values, it was the best approach to meeting the need (Capps, 2015). Family system theory is instrumental in assisting the researcher in explaining the behavior within the context of the community (Haefner, 2015). Social workers utilize this approach to detect the skills needed for integration (Capps, 2015). According to several methods of research and surveys, practitioners gauge success as the implementation of community awareness, government support, and evidence-based practices of practitioners. This research will assess research methods that will further explain research design and data collection. Results will also allow for the presentation of the research findings. In Section 2 the action research includes an introduction of the research design and data collection, the research design, methodology, data analysis, and ethical procedures. Based on the data collection, the information in Section 2 provides an accurate and appropriate interpretation of the research.

## Section 2: Research Design and Data Collection

### **Research Design and Data Collection**

Displaced refugees are fleeing their countries of origin daily. As they escape, they must adapt in new and strange lands. Social service providers who work in these settings have the responsibility to offer services that will assist the individuals in becoming self-sufficient. This qualitative research design and data collection will help in seeking best practices for those that care for newly arrived refugees to the country. Focus groups will be utilized as the methodology, through qualitative narrative interviews.

Kroening, Moore, Welch, Halterman, and Hyman (2016) reported a qualitative study involving two focus groups. There were 19 interviews conducted with 16 refugees and 13 refugee stakeholders. Evaluation of integration services including healthcare and education among refugees is the purpose of the study. It identified and explored practices related to health care issues in refugee children, including cultural barriers and delays in health treatments. To no surprise, the study unveiled that outcomes would be impacted if there was an absence or suspension in the treatment of the refugee. Stakeholders involved in this experiment felt their input and coordination of refugee services was needed. As collaborators of service within the community, their involvement was critical in the identification of the needed services within the refugee community.

Vaitkeviciute and Snieskiene (2016) conducted a study referencing five social workers in a qualitative research project. In the research, European social workers assist refugees that individually migrated to Europe with no association or contact with their

family. These individuals were considered vulnerable and only received help to integrate into the community from municipalities. Municipalities in Europe are considered the largest governing body organization in Europe. They consist of about 42 countries and approximately 150,000 regional and local authorities (CEMR, 2015). For the five social workers, semistructured interviews were used, and the participants worked as staff in the municipalities for the integration process. Through the 12 months of interviewing, Vaitkeviciute and Snieskiene found that refugees fleeing to Europe were the least satisfied with integration services. Participants noted the refugees felt discriminated against and were bullied. It was also pointed out that finding employment was also a challenge. Employees were leery in offering refugee jobs, and many refugees were discriminated against because of their refugee status. Social exclusion was prevalent and was exclusively difficult in Lithuania, a north-east region in Europe. In most cases, language barriers were a contributor to the unemployment in Lithuania. Refugees fleeing to this area were less likely to find employment due to the discrimination against the refugee's native Arabic language (European Web Site on Integration, 2017). In the research's conclusion, the social workers gave evidence to a successful means of integration. All refugee cases, according to their cultures, experiences, and needs will demonstrate individualized practices. Working with individuals through a professional social service system, as a continuity of care is also an objective.

Scholars do not understand the process of integration as it pertains to refugees (Alencar, 2017). Integration is adapting to the culture of the host city, state, country, and

society. Scholars stereotyped the integration process, indicating that those who refuse to adapt become problematic within the culture in which they have resettled. This qualitative study involved extensive interviews addressing the impact integration has on the community, and by navigating through social media for resources. Eighteen refugee participants were interviewed. Focus groups were held for 1 hour and cofacilitated by a refugee interpreter. Groups were transcribed, coded, and quoted. In conclusion of the study, it was revealed that although resources are limited to refugees, they somehow found a means to access social media. Through social media, the refugees were able to obtain resources within their communities. Social media use was declared as the first step to integration services. Through social media, refugees could hear first-hand from relatives and friends of the accepting agencies that possessed the willingness to assist.

The social media study gave tremendous insight into qualitative research through focus groups. As this research proposal addressed refugee integration, the studies allowed for experiential thoughts behind the actions toward practice. Refugees were the target population in this research study. Through this research, the writer is expected to gain innovated designs to enhance the integration process better. Qualitative studies gave vision to each case referenced. They offered in-depth information and illustrated an explanation for every circumstance.

### **Study Population**

A collection of individuals that play a role in research as the participants are the study population. In many cases, the research population is drawn as a sample, due to

numerous potential applicants. Research is costly; therefore, the small sample technique keeps the cost and discussions controllable (Lavrakas, 2008). Each study population is selected due to similar traits and characteristics. A subset of the population is the trial (Lavrakas, 2008). To conduct a study that will arrive at the same conclusion is the objective of the subgroup (Lavrakas, 2008).

The focus group will consist of 8-12 social workers. Voluntary resettlement agencies in the Dallas Fort Worth (DFW) metroplex in Texas will be used to contact social workers who are willing to participate in the study. Researchers will use emails (Appendix B), telephone calls (Appendix C), and face-to-face contact (Appendix A) to communicate with the prospective participants. Upon the selection of social workers, an informed consent for (Appendix A) will be obtained. This document will confirm the participant's understanding of the project. A confidentiality agreement (Appendix D-E) will be presented upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to begin the study. Identifying data and electronic data files will be stored in a separate filing system than the research documents. When reporting and sharing data, the identifying information will be anonymous.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Focus groups will be used in the study as a means of data collection. The DSW Capstone Research Deliverable is intended to solve a problem. It would address the issues related to the study *Integration of Social Work Practices with Refugees Migrating to the United States: An Action Research Study*. This information will include the

evidence and data related to the issue and it will validate the authenticity of the problem. Deliverables for this project will be justified through notes taken within the focus group setting. This process will allow for dialogue amongst the participants and the researcher.

Focus groups selected for this project will determine how the integrated refugee programs can improve, and how the advocacy of integration programs will be structured. Research will be captured by a questionnaire (Appendix H) for structure within the discussion. Through the coordination of the agency leaders, each staff member will be invited to participate. Subjective, qualitative research will be used to uncover the trends of social work practice with refugee migration. The researcher will facilitate the groups. All participants are expected to respond to the questions that are guided by the questionnaire (See Appendix H). Hence, the responses will be coded. Using a codebook (see Appendix K-L), the researcher will document the reactions and responses. This codebook was designed by the researcher, to gain actual data from the participants. Seidman (2013) stated the research method is designed to align with the research questions. Codebooks are justified through notes taken from the questionnaire within the focus group setting. Dialogue amongst the participants and the researcher is allowed through this process. As a guideline, the codebook will assist with coding responses by using the codebook definitions (see Appendix J).

Variables are included in the codebook, indicating how things were measured and will identify its category. On the contrary, a discussion guide is a tool that will be used on an ongoing basis. The device will assist the researcher in remaining on target with the

pre-determined topics (see Appendix M). To keep the conversation interesting and active, the discussion guide will consist of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions will keep the focus group structured, alleviating a drift in the dialogue. To keeping the focus groups and discussion on task, a handout with various keywords and social work terms (see Appendix N) related to refugee resettlement, skills, and tools was also developed as a deliverable. These keywords are the same words researched for best and evidence-based practices through scholarly articles about this project.

### **Overview of Methodology**

The methodology of the research is a systematic means of solving an issue. This stage of research is when the researcher explains the work and the phase where the phenomena are predicted (Bryman, 2004). Action research will be used as the methodology to explore the integrative techniques used by social workers, who provide services to refugees in the United States (Capps et al., 2015). Need for an adequate response to refugees is crucial (Papademetriou, 2016). A focus group will be used to capture the information for this study. Units will be conducted for one hour or less in the refugee resettlement offices of the resettlement agencies in the Dallas Fort Worth areas within Texas. Consent forms, emails, and telephone scripts will serve as the modes of communication (see Appendix A-C & I). A letter of approval will be received from Catholic Charities Dallas, Catholic Charities of Fort Worth, the International Rescue Committee, and the Refugee Services of Texas before the implementation of the focus groups (see Appendix D-G).

**Prospective Data**

Data collected will be through a focus group. All participants will be encouraged to call Avril Knox, MSW, ACSW, a doctoral candidate at Walden University. Dialogue will also be supported before the focus group for clarification of the expectations. Focus groups will be conducted after approval is granted through the IRB.

**Participants**

Participants in this study will consist of 8-12 social workers that work in the field of refugee resettlement. Participants will be recruited from four refugee resettlement agencies in the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex. Informed consent forms will be distributed to those who accept the role as a participant. Eligibility for the role of a participant will be to (a) possess a Master of Social Work degree, (b) work at a local resettlement program, (c) speak and write English fluently, (d) have the willingness and ability to participate in the research project, and (e) agree to complete and adhere to the informed consent. All individuals participating in the research will receive a Starbucks gift card valued at \$10.

**Instrumentation**

An instrument is a measuring device that is used to consider a course of action, in an action research project (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003). Action research is research information that is used to enhance and improve the services of an organization, by inquiring about the performance of a practice (Rigsby, 2018). This research will consist of a questionnaire (Appendix H) that will be utilized in a focus group. The questions will

be structured, to obtain the data for the research study. They would be used to define the target participant and their perspectives as participants in the field of study (Abawi, 2013). When using the questionnaire (Appendix H), the information cannot be validated. Annum (2017) stated the surveys are data collection that will present anonymity. Collecting information in a focus group brings about extensive dialogues. Data collection gives the researcher the ability to explain complex questions in detail and receive an adequate amount of feedback. The researcher will develop the questionnaire. Validity is present when the results reflect what was initially measured (Haroz et al., 2014). Moreover, existing data sources will not be used for this proposal. There will be no collection of organizational data through client notes, recordings, or internal documentation.

### **Data Analysis**

Predictive Analysis Today (2018) stated data analysis is the process of discovering data that is useful, supportive, and allows for results. Data analysis consists of various stages. These phases are data cleaning, then the analysis phase, the confirmatory and exploratory phase, the stabilization of the results, the uncovering of the statistical methods, then the presentation of the information (Predictive Analysis Today, 2018). In this study, the researcher will explore data through qualitative text.

Qualitative text analysis will be used to transcribe the research within the questionnaires (Appendix H). It is a method where the researcher can focus more on the meaning of the message, than a number related to the message that may occur (Kuchartz,

2013). Highlighting the distinctive discussion, integrating the data, and categorizing the responses is the purpose of the data analysis (Kuckartz, 2014). Cyclical and ongoing are terms used to describe the data analysis process. Observations throughout the focus groups will be used by the researcher to guide items listed on the questionnaire that may be pertinent to the study. Focusing on the problem allows the researcher to concentrate on the purpose of the study. Wang (2014) followed Taylor-Powell's and Renner's (2003) data analysis steps. These stages of analysis include comprehension of the data, focusing on the issue, categorizing the themes within the study, recognizing the connections of the study material, and interpreting the context (Wang, 2014).

The data gathered will be explored using the notes from the codebook and the discussion guide regarding the integration of social work practices as it relates to the migration of refugees. As this research will be carefully planned, the results will have the capability to unveil reliable research and outcomes. Information gathered from this process will be assessed by exploring the need of specific training for social workers in cultural competency, cultural diversity, cultural sensitivity, acculturation, and assimilation, as it is related to refugee integration.

Testing the reliability of the analysis will be conducted to alleviate any biases or judgments of the researcher. This test can be allowed when including a research assistant, serving as a peer reviewer. Assistance can offer another perspective on the findings. Once the information is validated, the results will be presented in a Microsoft Excel workbook. Planning for well-coordinated research on integrative services produces a positive

research outcome. A more useful and accurate finding indicates quality services are needed for newly arrived refugees. Efficient services will also be discovered in the data analysis process. These effective practices will lead to self-sufficient refugees. When analyzing data, it should be determined if the data is relevant. This data will address one specific area of interest, as related to refugee integration. Trends will be detected and additional data will be sought, if necessary. Hence, waiting on appropriate and useful data is the most rewarding. Several practices can be extrapolated from great data. However, when a small amount of evidence is found, the conclusion of the study may be compromised.

### **Ethical Procedures**

An ethical dilemma is a process of deciding the best resolution for a situation (The New Social Worker, 2018). Moral dilemmas are routine in the field of social work. The schools of social work infuse their programs with professional methods that will assist social work students in preparations for these expected circumstances. Therefore, when determining if a situation is ethical, the social worker will have to consider various factors such as its values, morals, policies, and laws that are practiced in the United States and in Europe. Hence, in the United States, the consideration is most importantly guided by standards set forth by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2017).

Problems identified in the social work practice are the integration of social work practices with refugees migrating to the United States. These services become an issue for refugees when there is a lack of training and understanding of the needs of individuals

or refugee families. Culture and its strengths should be recognized and explored in the field of social work (NASW, 2017). Therefore, social workers must obtain knowledge to demonstrate competency when working in the various setting and with diverse populations. NASW (2015) suggested social workers are not to discriminate based on culture, religion, or race. NASW's (2009) code of ethics states social workers are called to the community to enhance the human need of those displaced, suffering from conflict, or encountered natural disasters around the world. While protecting the research participants in this study, the project must provide evidence-based practices to highlight professional compliance that cultivates the orientation of migrants, cultural diversity, and cultural sensitivity when working with refugees. Scholarly knowledge, skills, and abilities will help social workers better serve the clients, with the intent to ensure independence.

This research study will not jeopardize the well-being of any participant. Confidentiality will be exercised and the data collection will be kept in an encrypted file of my laptop. As the researcher, I will operate professionally, allowing the participants freedom of speech. The participants will be treated respectfully, and the researcher will not pose any biases or judgmental thoughts. Moreover, the participants will not be asked to answer any questions that create uncomfortable feelings.

### **Summary**

Refugees are displaced individuals that had to flee their countries to start a new life. It is the duties and responsibilities of the international social workers to help the

refugees become acclimated to their new environment and become self-sufficient. Hence, to fulfill this role, social workers need evidence-based practices as a reference to quality care. These practices are sought through research studies, where design, data collection, methodology, data analysis, and ethics will play a role in the professional training.

Focus groups are the start of research. In this study, the participants are contacted and will be given an option to participate. I will use instruments to measure the data collection and the validity of the tool. When the results are measured, the collection of data will follow. The action research measuring the integration of refugees in the United States will be collected in a focus group, comprised of social workers, utilizing a codebook and a discussion guide. These tools will ensure adequate documentation of the focus group dialogues. Data are then explored through a methodology process and will be transcribed. While gathering and examining data, the researcher must practice principles within ethical standards. When working with refugees, it is more so required to understand ethics, due to various beliefs of individuals in a multicultural setting. It would be helpful if the social worker practices cultural competency, cultural diversity, and cultural sensitivity so that the data is not skewed due to a lack of commitment to understanding the cultural differences.

In the research design and data collection process, the study population will be contacted in efforts to gain data that will extract data from the program providers. The information will be gathered through interviews and surveys. Action research is the methodology that will offer a culture of collective stories. However, the research

questions will also allow for appropriate responses to the research questions. Problems identified in the social work practice will be explored. Standards of the National Association of Social Workers practices will be reflected in the results. Section 3 of the project will include the data analysis techniques, the findings, and a summarized narrative of the results. Based on the methodology used to gather the data, Section 3 will state the findings without the interpretation or biases of the researcher. Here is where the results of the project are indicated.

### Section 3: Presentation of the Findings

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

The purpose of this action research project was to provide data on the integration of social work practices with refugees migrating to the United States. The research included eight participants from various resettlement agencies who were part of a focus group at one of the agencies' office. The groups answered questions concerning how the integration of refugee services should be measured through various parameters: language development, employment success, economic stability, what tools prepare practitioners to serve newly arrived refugees, and what approaches can successfully be used to educate social service professionals before assisting refugees. Section 3 includes the research questions, discussions of data analysis, validation, and research findings to the research questions. The research question that reflects the research study is: How does the exploration of integration-related practices impact self-sufficiency amongst refugees in the United States? The subquestions are as follows:

- What are the goals and expectations of refugees migrating to the United States?
- How should the integration of refugee services be measured through language development, employment success, and economic stability?
- Are there any specific practices or coordination of services that lead to improved outcomes for refugees?
- What tools of practice prepare practitioners to serve newly arrived refugees?

- What successful approaches can be followed to educate social workers before assisting refugees?

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The social workers' role in integrating social work practices with those arriving to the United States will add to the qualitative research project. Social work staff received emails, and those who expressed an interest received email reminders to participate in the focus group. Directors of resettlement agencies were asked to share this information, which included information-sharing in metropolitan Dallas. The latter was done at a monthly meeting of refugee providers in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. The forums were led by the refugee agencies in the Dallas area. Participants were recruited for the focus groups from these agencies. Within the focus group, discussions referenced the application of social work practices to refugee resettlement in the United States, offering responses to the research questions.

There were eight respondents in the study. They consisted of individuals with a Master of Social Work degree with refugee experience and bachelor-level social service professionals with extensive experiences with refugee resettlement agencies. Recruitment took one week. The researcher sent an email to the department heads of the refugee agencies in the Dallas/ Fort Worth area. Department heads then shared the information with their staff. An email was sent to interested individuals by the researcher with an attached consent form that explained the purpose of the study. Individuals were asked to review, sign, and bring the consent form to the study group held on February 28, 2020 in

Dallas, Texas, at 9:30 am. It lasted 2 hours and the transcription of the focus group took 1 week. Transcribed notes came from the participant notes during the discussion, from the qualitative research questionnaire (QRQ) (Appendix H), and the codebooks (Appendix J). To decode the codebooks, the researcher used codebook definitions (Appendix J). Responses to research questions were consistent with agency participants. Eight of eight participants understood the purpose of the study and had the same level of responses when answering the focus questions. For example, the service delivery for resettlement, education, employment, health, housing, and advocacy were topics discussed in the QRQ, as they relate to social work practices. All agreed there was room for improvement when servicing refugees. There was also consensus that social service providers should be trained in refugee resettlement before or within 2 weeks of the start date at a refugee resettlement agency.

The transcription of the questionnaire revealed that 12% of the participants worked in the field of social work between 1-3 years. Twenty-five percent worked in the field for 7-9 years, and 63% worked in the field of social work for 10 or more years. The questionnaire asked the total number of years the participant worked in general refugee services. Twenty-four percent responded to working in refugee services for 1-2 years. Thirty-eight percent worked in refugee services for 4-6 years, and 38% worked for 10 years or more. Two-thirds of participants who interacted with the researcher were caseworkers at their agencies, while one-third were managers. Sixty percent of the participants worked directly in refugee resettlement and adjustment for four or more

years, while 40% worked in the field for less than 3 years. Findings were further validated.

### **Validation**

I used journaling to keep notes, questions, comments, and anecdotes from the focus group. This process facilitated the discussion, as questions, answers, and discussions flowed, and thereby avoided gaps in conversation. I kept all notes in a composition notebook and reviewed them when questions about the research arose. Participants' notes were also instrumental in my data analysis. Each participant was given the QRQ to aid in developing potential questions. If the question was not given in the questionnaire, it served as a guide for the participants to formulate their own question or comment. I used these questions and the questionnaire to guide the process. The questionnaire had either multiple choice or yes/no questions. This approach allowed for intense discussion, which was valuable data in itself. The discussion guide (Appendix K) was also valued in this process of the project. The discussion guide served as a simple way to generate thoughts. One group participant praised the preparation of the handouts as they highlighted key discussion touchpoints. A one-page discussion guide (Appendix K), key word list (Appendix L), list of ground rules (Appendix N), focus questions (Appendix M), and a short questionnaire (Appendix H) were all well received. The participants used the tools to navigate the discussion. For example, on a few occasions, one group member made sure the group stayed on task and made certain the researcher noted frequently used words in the key word list.

## **Validation Procedures**

Transcribed data were gathered through notes from questionnaires and codebooks. For several hours during the week, I validated and confirmed the participants' written and verbal responses. Themes of resettlement, education, employment, housing, healthcare, and advocacy were consistent with the predicted areas of integration of social work practice and were reflective of the research questions. Discussions involving those themes are solely the opinions and professional experiences of the social workers who work in the field of international social work. Refugee resettlement is their area of expertise. Therefore, the information is accurate, as it relates to their time at these agencies and their expertise in the field of refugee integration. While transcribing, I read my notes on three separate times to ensure I received responses for all of the research questions. However, their information is subjective, and therefore there may be questions regarding its reliability and validity. In efforts to confirm my original themes, I reviewed research materials to find consistencies of the results found in the study. While the procedures are not extensive in validity, I am presenting the data's transparency as a way to comprehend the findings.

## **Reliability and Validity**

According to Noble (2015), qualitative research is often questioned in relation to its reliability and validity. Questionnaires and focus groups that ask the same questions are considered reliable data. Noble also stated that reliability occurs when the research produces consistent results. Validity, though, is measured by what is intended to be

measured (Noble, 2015). Reliability and validity together indicated that this research is sufficient. In addition to reliability and validity, qualitative research often considers data trustworthiness as an aspect of processing qualitative research (Devault, 2018). The components of data trustworthiness are confirmability, credibility, dependability, and transferability.

### **Data Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, the aspect of reality is included as the relationship between the researcher and participants. As there is no absolute truth in such research, the purpose becomes illustrating idiographic knowledge (Anney, 2014). Information or knowledge related to the project is part of the facts related to the international social work focus groups (Anney, 2014).

Confirmability relates to my disclaimer that the results are true inquiries (Anney, 2014). This data may be attained through journal documentation. Reflective journaling can be used for confirmability. Data from this research generated notes from the focus group discussion, giving me the opportunity to review them. This phase of the research illustrated idiographic knowledge (Anney, 2014). Information or knowledge related to the project is considered the study of the facts related to the focus groups of the participating international social workers.

Credibility is the most valued framework of trustworthiness for qualitative research (Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, 2018). It is important that participants believe the data they are crosschecking are accurate. Therefore, it is

important that they decide if the results actually demonstrate consistency within the study. Another term for credibility is “internal validity.”

According to Kortsjens and Moser (2017), dependability guides the researcher through the entire course of the research. Documenting the project is associated with the framework of dependability that allows processing. All documents will be kept on file during the study. These give the researcher additional resources that assist in transcribing the findings.

Trochim (2006) stated that transferability is present when the researcher thoroughly describes the research and the assumptions related to it. In order to generalize the study, I included transferability, which allows me to show that the findings of the study would be applicable to other, similar contexts. For example, this might consist of assuring that the social worker has the necessary tools to serve the refugee population. Transferability assures that participants are aware of their biases. This practice helps keep participants from acting on their biases that may affect their responses.

### **Limitations**

There were some limitations to this study. Although the focus group participants are vested in the population they serve and the problem statement was relevant to all participants, self-reported data are limited and can rarely be independently verified (University of Southern California, 2020). The researcher to relied on the information self-reported in the focus group. There were several refugee resettlement agencies represented in the focus group that operate under the same

government funding guidelines. According to the University of Southern California (2020), the possibility of attribution or the act of attributing positive events and outcomes to one's own agency is likely because all agencies involved in the survey compete for the same federal funding.

## **Findings**

### **Research Question**

I examined integrative techniques used by social workers who provide services to refugees in the United States and discovered practices that affect self-sufficiency among refugees. The themes emphasized in the focus groups were: (a) goals and expectations of refugees migrating to the United States; (b) measuring integrative refugee services (language development, employment success, and economic stability); (c) specific practices that lead to outcomes; and (d) tools used by practitioners, and essential training for social workers before assisting refugees.

### **Expectations of Refugees**

The finding related to the expectations of refugees was seen in participant responses. 100% of participants agreed with the expectation that knowledge of resettlement and cultural orientation would be provided to each refugee population. The United States Department of State provides this orientation to refugees, in hopes of their easy acclimation to the country. All eight of the participants' responses aligned with the US Department of State's expectations. However, the expectation of the participants' knowledge of refugee resettlement varied. For example, the participants that did not come

to the United States as a refugee had clearer and concise expectations of a refugee than those that came to the United States as a refugee. The non-refugee participant indicated that the expectation to come to the United States was to live a better life and become self-sustaining citizens of the United States. Whereas, five of eight participants that came to the United States as refugees thought the expectation was a milestone to a new life. These individuals saw their lives as vessels of change, where the need to learn English, find stable employment, and decent housing was key in becoming successful as a resident of the United States. The intensity of the drive was more elevated. Yet, the pain of leaving their homelands were devastating and depressing. One participant that came to the United States as a refugee described the migration as excruciating. As the discussion heightened, a participant that did not come to the United States as a refugee mentioned the need for social workers to have a level of humility to understand the needs of someone that fled their country due to persecution of war or conflict. One participant exclaimed if a refugee had the choice to stay in their country of origin, they would if they could and the sensitivity of the migration should be respected by the professional providing care after the resettlement period.

### **Integrative Refugee Services**

Each participant was given a questionnaire (Appendix H), discussion guide (Appendix K), a list of key words used in refugee resettlement (Appendix L), and the list of focus group questions (Appendix M) to aid in the discussion regarding integrated services with refugees. The integrative services considered for dialogue were service

delivery, education, employment, health, housing, and advocacy. Each of these programs were included in the focus groups and thus had a fair representation in the group's discussion of most important versus least important. Hence, all participants identified these services as essential.

### **Service Delivery**

There was unanimous agreement that service delivery to newly arrived refugees was important and that the need to support refugees in these ways required specific skills. Participants who had worked in the field of international social work for many years initiated the discussion. The need for empathy, cultural orientation, cultural competence, multiculturalism, cultural humility, and cultural diversity were frequently mentioned. Respect for clients, having clients trust the social worker, the social worker actively listening, and being able to set clear boundaries were also emphasized. The group stressed the need for training cultural humility and cultural competency. If international social workers are adequately trained, participants felt they would be successful in providing a positive experience of transition.

### **Education**

Approaches to refugee education were assessed as well. All participants said the location of education classes were easily accessible and readily available for those that needed the service. For example, classes are conducted in the apartment complexes in which refugee families live. One member stated the classrooms had been in areas in the community that were less accessible. Although the participants felt the refugee programs

gave sufficient information on the education system in the United States, they noted the agencies administering these programs failed to describe the limited class facilities and transportation barriers to the classes. Only one of three agencies provided transportation to the English Language Instruction (ELI) classes or provided courses in convenient locations. One agency did not have access to ELI and had to collaborate in order to allow access for their agency's clients.

ELI is an excellent educational service that allows refugees to work towards fluent English and become self-sufficient through employment. Many employers seek out those who have some degree of English mastery. These individuals have attained higher salaries and better positions. Hence, they can achieve better opportunities and advance based on fluency. A significant barrier to language training—as noted above—is the lack of transportation, which leads to the inability to complete classes within these programs. In other cases, individuals begin work and cannot continue classes. Many choose work over education because of the need for income. In other cases, if the refugee completed coursework with the resettlement agencies, s/he is referred to the community college and will be assigned an advisor there.

### **Employment**

Refugees who resettle in the United States receive a government-issued authorization card and are encouraged to become self-sufficient through employment (Cepla, 2018). The expectation to become employed is immediate. Therefore, resettlement agencies in the Dallas area are required to begin job placement services for

newly arrived refugees. This program is the core of the resettlement process, due to the need for independence among the population. Due to a growing job market (Hoopfer, 2018), the programs were able to meet their goals. Seventy-five percent of the participants stated the refugees had jobs through their placement efforts. Ninety-eight percent of these placements were thought to have occurred 90-180 days of arrival. The barriers discussed in the focus groups were the lack of transportation in the suburban areas of Dallas, and clients' lack of motivation to adjust to their new environment. All clients are expected to become acquainted with their new setting. It is the wish of others to return to their home countries, with the hope of peace and global change.

Some refugees who migrated to the United States, have careers and are professionals in their home countries. The refugee staff agreed the positions they held are viable. However, the refugee would not be employed at the same level once resettled. Seventy-five percent of participants stated that clients would be assessed through an individualized plan employment plan and assessed for professional recertification. One participant suggested, "we look at their skills in their home countries, and we try to get them into a work environment where they can work up the ladder in their field." Another participant added, "we work with them so they can find success on their own in the company; it is the environment needed for them to grow."

Building a relationship with employers was discussed as an effective technique for employing refugees. The participants agreed the challenge is getting to know the employer. One participant stated, "Once you build a rapport with the employer and have

them hire the refugee, the trust of the staff and client will increase.” To have the client exhibit positive work experiences, the social worker makes sure strengths-based case management is conducted. It was also agreed that if such a management plan is utilized, the refugee would more likely succeed in the job placement. When describing success in job placement, one participant emphasized the need to educate the employer about refugee resettlement. For the refugee to have a good experience in employment, the employer must have some knowledge of the refugee’s culture. One participant indicated providing educational materials about refugee resettlement was helpful. With handouts and brochures explaining the resettlement process, the employer gained knowledge of the newly employed refugee’s background. Another participant mentioned offering information about the refugee’s home country as an added bonus to engage the refugee and the employer.

### **Health**

In order to gain the status of a refugee, several health screenings must be conducted before approval to travel is granted (Cepla, 2018). These health screenings are to detect existing illnesses and to protect the United States from contagious illness. The United States has a list of conditions that are allowed. If there is no objection, the government will approve travel based on health, but it is still contingent on a political screening process.

When the refugee arrives, the resettlement agency must follow-up on the condition, if applicable. Required vaccinations will be issued to those before being able

to work or enroll in school. For participants who assist in tracking the health of refugees, 98% reported compliance to follow-up medical care. The remaining two percent were thought to have care in the cities to which they moved. Follow-up care is routinely coordinated through the area's county clinic that exclusively serves refugees. The services take place within 30 days of arrival. Hence, the two percent of those without care tend to move in states where they have family or relationships known to them before resettlement.

When discussing the health care needs of refugees and the services provided to these individuals, one participant indicated social workers must know about the health needs of the refugee. The participant mentioned that in many cases, the refugee may have gone years before receiving health and wellness checks. According to this participant, health screenings are conducted in the refugee camps. However, the screenings may have been the refugee's first interaction with medical personnel. Another participant mentioned that in some countries, refugees had never been to the dentist, namely those from Burma and Somalia. Hence, the participant stated the social worker becomes the health advocate for the refugee. Consequently, two of the eight participants suggested this is why the social worker must have a patient, compassionate heart for international social work practices. One of the two participants mentioned being a voice for the refugee when they cannot explain their deprivations to society. As refugees are new to the community, refugee clinics can cater to refugees' specific needs. Hence, after 6 months of healthcare at this refugee clinic, the refugee must go into mainstream clinics for care. All

participants agreed that educating mainstream healthcare workers about refugee resettlement and refugees' healthcare needs was important because the refugee and the healthcare worker must engage to effectively be served and to efficiently service. When differences are present, it affects the behaviors and health beliefs of the refugee and providers (Department of Health & Human Services, 2019).

### **Housing**

Housing refugees is a prerequisite to resettlement. Each refugee must have housing options upon arrival. This service is prearranged before the refugee or refugee family arrives. A client's biographical information is sent to the resettlement agency, along with travel dates. The staff of these agencies will coordinate this service under the newcomer's name, and the agency of resettlement.

Participants who engaged in apartment set-ups, and home inspections of the refugee's relatives, focused on the fact that a stable and habitable environment is necessary for successful acculturation. The participants mentioned having comfortable, safe, and affordable housing as one less obstacle for the refugee seeking advancement in a new country. All participants claimed sustainable housing for refugees is vital for a successful resettlement to America.

According to one participant, housing for large families is an issue. In some cases, negotiating rent was necessary. When a large family needs housing, expenses double. Another participant stated there is a need to negotiate housing cost with landlords or property owners. This same participant mentioned the resettlement agency in which she

is employed would host luncheons for the property management, make multiple trips throughout the month to the leasing office, and set aside time for the property manager to visit with concerned refugee tenants. These meetings were scheduled so the refugee staff can share information about the process of resettlement with the managers, to visit concerning leasing ledgers of refugees that occupy the apartment, and to allow the property manager to engage with refugees families to get to know them better. One participant mentioned this engagement helps the property managers better understand the refugee population, allows the refugee to get accustomed to advocating for self in regard to housing and housing maintenance issues, and builds a stronger sense of community.

### **Advocacy**

Resettlement agencies in the Dallas area established a monthly refugee organization, the Dallas Area Refugee Forum. The Forum is the center for advocacy efforts, where agencies collaborate and share resources with the intention of educating federal government officials, lawmakers, and decision makers in the Dallas area on refugee resettlement. All focus group participants have attended meetings as a means of advocating for their clientele. Participants who came to the United States as refugees, have learned the English language, and have found employment in refugee resettlement services, suggested that telling their story was a form of advocacy. These individuals suggested that their knowledge of the refugee process and their later successes gave a clear indication that refugees can contribute to society as well as any citizen of the United States.

Almost all (95%) of the participants also thought having refugees tell their story was an excellent way to enhance advocacy efforts. The remainder felt that newly arrived refugees would be too sensitive and could have a setback in personal goals if their journey was rejected or ridiculed. Therefore, this participant stated there was a need to guide the more sensitive refugees towards mainstream social activities outside the refugee arena. The idea was to have refugee families do community service work in the larger community by having the refugee “participate in integration projects service projects such as feeding the homeless.” By letting refugee families participate in such projects, all participants believed this activity could be used as an example of an agency’s outreach illustrating how refugees can contribute to society.

### **Social Work Practices**

In an effort to assist a refugee client as fully as possible, research participants pointed out that staff need a willingness to work with refugees. It was stated that this field is not for individuals simply looking for work. The position demands the skills of an international social worker. All participants suggested that hiring managers seek those with experience, cultural competency, cultural diversity, and cultural sensitivity. Participants working with refugees will either speak the language of the refugee or have a caseworker that works alongside that speaks the same language. Like other social service positions, staff are expected to have patience with clients. Serving this population is an extensive task. There is a language barrier, and even when speaking the same language,

other issues—such as trust—may arise. The clients are in a strange country and becoming acclimated may be difficult.

One participant mentioned that if the social worker does not speak the language of the refugee, it is imperative to have an interpreter or staff member speak the language. Much of the service to refugees is to understand the culture and to welcome the culture. One participant suggested other social service staff follow the lead of the agency in which she works and utilize the linguistically aligned staff to comfort the refugee. When the refugee comes to the United States for the first time, this culturally aligned resident will either cook food for the refugee family or make certain someone from the community cooks a hot meal for the families' arrival. When the refugee family flies to the United States they are sometimes on a flight for 24 hours, stated a group participant. Gestures, such as having groceries available upon their arrival and prepared food in their apartment, could be key to a successful welcome. Like any other individual, refugees want to have a sense of belonging, stated a participant. According to another participant, the refugee's success may be determined by how they were perceived and received during the first 48 hours of their arrival to the United States.

### **Social Work Integration**

To provide social work integration services to refugees migrating to this country, the group highlighted linguistic interpretations and translations as essential, so refugees could receive instructions in their own language. The State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration mandate using a client's native language so the

social worker's guidance can be understood. Other characteristics shared by social workers are the desire to advocate for, empower, and transform the lives of the refugees. These strategies provide competent services within the refugee network that culturally align with the clients. The members within the focus group unanimously concluded that building a strong refugee provider forum was the key to successful integration.

Much information is shared in the Dallas Refugee Forum meetings concerning services that could better serve the population, and potential best practices or missed opportunities in working with refugees. As some of the social workers came to the United States as refugees, they reported having a stake in providing quality services to refugee clients. Hence, they all felt it was their professional obligation to serve this group (and all others) with equal dignity, respect, and compassion. The group discussed weekly case staffing at their agencies, Forum meetings, and quarterly meetings in the Metroplex to share practices, success stories, and receive training that would enhance their skills.

### **Professional Trainings**

According to one focus group member, integrating social work practices when working with refugees is highly respected in the refugee community. One participant said that "social workers are considered the experts in the refugee community" and are frequently called upon for advice, suggestions, recommendations, and training opportunities. Aside from their conducting trainings, they are well supported by federal offices such as the Bureau of Population and Refugee Migration, and the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

## Summary

Social workers in the field of refugee resettlement can work independently. However, those who work within one or more programs tend to have effective integrative skills. Participants in this research reported excellent communication among staff, both within their agency, and with service providers in the Metroplex. Outcomes are usually met due to collaboration and integration of programs, services, and social work skills. In many cases, services overlap to ensure the refugee is receiving adequate support.

The focus group started by identifying who was a refugee and their expectations in coming to this country. They agreed that refugees who migrated to the United States had to flee their countries due to political or social conflict. One member of the focus group stated, “Refugees do not come here because they want to be here. They come because they have no choice in the resettlement in most case. They are scared to engage in war or be killed.” All agreed that refugees’ goal was to become self-sufficient in their community. It was unanimously stated that all refugees are required to find employment or some other income source. The group agreed that only a small number would benefit from government aid such as Social Security Disability. The major source of income is employment.

“Success of the refugee was said to fall under the auspice of the social workers and other case managers within resettlement,” stated one group participant. Although there are many practices that assist refugees, the group agreed that there was a real need to have the refugee trust the worker. As the refugee traveled far from their home country,

they experience fear, sadness, and in some instances stress-related illnesses (UNHCR, 2017). It was also unanimously agreed that “the refugee organization becomes the family of the refugee migrant.” Therefore, agency staff examine their “commitment to the cause as their duty to serve.”

Participants expressed compassion when working with refugees. They emphasized mastering the refugee process and exhibiting cultural humility, competence, sensitivity when serving their key constituents and providing quality services to refugees migrating to the United States. These topics dominated the dialogue. Each participant had a story to tell of the importance of cultural humility, cultural competence, and cultural sensitivity. When asked the question, “what is the key responsibility or need in working with refugees?”, the group reiterated these three terms. As a result of these findings in particular, Section 4 includes a discussion about professional ethics in social work practice, recommendations for practice, and implications for social change.

## Section 4: Recommended Solutions

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this action research study was to identify effective and quality integrative techniques used by social workers who provide services to refugees in the United States. The study identified challenges social workers have faced when working with refugees during the integration process and explored the necessary skills needed to facilitate services in refugee organizations. This study sought to provide suggestions for improving services for refugees who migrated to the Dallas/Fort Worth area, as well as other places in the United States. The starting point for gathering information on integrating services began with the Research Question (RQ): How does the exploration of integration-related practices impact self-sufficiency among refugees in the United States? The purpose of this study was to explore ways to welcome, empower, and maximize support for the refugee community. The expected results of the study were to provide confidence that would encourage refugees to advocate for themselves and other refugees. The hope for the project is to empower and transform communities that in turn will grow with stakeholder and community support.

Four themes emerged from the focus group's discussion: the group's understanding of the expectations of the refugees migrating to the United States; success of the refugees who have migrated; practices of the social workers; and the need for social workers to have training in cultural humility, cultural competency, sensitivity, and diversity to serve in the field of refugee migration.

### **Applying Professional Ethics in Social Work Practice**

The focus group participants highlighted the positive influence of integrated service practices for social workers who serve the refugee population in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. An objective of this qualitative research was to explore integrative techniques used by social workers who provide services to refugees in the United States. In their discussion, they identified information that affected them professionally and influenced their views on social work practices. Unanimous responses were repeatedly expressed: “our service to refugees comes naturally” and “we are a close-knit service provider community and are always meeting to suggest new ways to better serve the refugees in this area.” One participant suggested a need for more participants to train and educate the community on refugee resettlement and the commitment needed in working with this population. The participant added that they “would volunteer to train the social work community at universities and colleges, so that the students can hear about refugees and understand the need for cultural sensitivity and competence to serve them.” Other group participants agreed that “many social workers lack this knowledge before working with a refugee organization,” and “social workers could better serve the refugee community if they were equipped with these skills prior to working in the refugee field.”

The focus group discussed their desire to help individuals who had not studied the history of refugees in college, primarily interns and volunteers that helped at the resettlement agencies. The discussion lead to instances where these interns and volunteers tend to want to “save the world and have no knowledge on how to not cross boundaries.”

One participant stated that they are “always training newcomers (interns) to the refugee field on issues of cultural humility.” The participant continued, “cultural humility is the word of choice I like to use versus cultural competency. Cultural competency gives the impression that the individual knows everything about a culture or is well versed about a culture. I believe the newcomers should practice cultural humility. This is when the individual is humble and respectful of the refugee’s culture. This attitude is not just a one-time training. It is an ongoing in-service.”

Consequently, the participants agreed the collaboration in this study allowed them to improve their work of defining social work roles. The responses and actions within the group promoted change through their shared results to positively influence policy in the provision of integrated social work practices when working with refugees migrating to the United States. The objective of this proposal was to promote and develop social work practices and allow collaborative learning. This study empowered social workers to learn from one another and further develop competencies. The focus group identified information that impacted the entire group. One member disclosed that the practices in social work is giving oneself the ability to practice common sense. This comment gave the group reassurance that they practice social work ethics without thinking about it. As a result of the confirmation of good practices, one group participant mentioned the importance of thinking before reacting and not reacting if the practice does not feel right. Eight of eight individuals agreed that if it does not feel right, it may be unethical. According to NASW (2017), the behavior of following logical thoughts guides clinical

social work. The participants' desire to do the right thing and not react to certain situations will impact social work practices within the areas of professional ethics.

### **Findings and Peer-Reviewed Literature**

A principle from the National Association of Social Workers' *Code of Ethics* that is related to working with refugees is the need for social workers to act to prevent discrimination based on religion, race, culture, and other factors (NASW, 2015). The *Code* also stated that social workers are called to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, particularly people who suffer displacement due to wars and violent civil conflicts (NASW, 2015). According to the focus group participants, the NASW statements "have assisted in the teachings of social workers in the refugee field." Hence, they all agreed that those outside the field have a steep learning curve about what is expected of an international social worker.

The NASW's 2016 response to the White House's views of refugee resettlement provides clinical social work practice with insight, and social workers now have the opportunity to learn about and practice social justice. This means not marginalizing or oppressing any group and assuring that human rights are extended to everyone (NASW, 2016). The focus group participants discussed these principles and the organization's relation to refugee resettlement and refugee services. All participants agreed on the "need to advocate for the vulnerable refugee population."

The group also agreed that "cultural competency and sensitivity are essential." One participant stated, "it is important to have some knowledge of the refugee's

background. This knowledge allows the refugee to trust you and confide in you.” Another stated, “knowing something about the refugee will also allow give you the tools to better serve the refugee; knowing where he is from, where he has been, his health status, and his level of employability.”

NASW’s *Code of Ethics* (2017) stated:

Social workers shall possess and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding that is inclusive of, but not limited to, the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions such as race and ethnicity; immigration and refugee status; tribal groups; religion and spirituality; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; social class; and mental or physical abilities of various cultural groups.

The *Code* details the need to be competent in the cultural background of those served.

The group unanimously suggested that possessing this skill or having the willingness to acquire it will allow the social worker to engage effectively with refugees.

The focus group participants disclosed the enmeshed refugee community as one that meets often to better serve the refugee population. Aside from the interagency meetings, participants meet monthly for the Dallas Area Refugee Forum and quarterly at the Refugee Metroplex meeting. At these meetings, participants and others place topics for discussion on the agenda and discuss the importance of the topic. One participant mentioned the NASW’s *Code of Ethics*, and all agreed that NASW was a guideline for social workers to follow, and provided a way to adhere to ethical practices. Table 1

includes details about how the five participants felt the NASW guidelines aligned with what they practiced.

Table 1 *Participant Alignment With NASW*

Characteristics	NASW (2015, 2017)	Focus Group
Acceptable knowledge base	X	X
Importance of cultural competency	X	X
Importance of cultural sensitivity	X	X
Meet the basic human needs of all people	X	X
Social workers to act to prevent discrimination	X	X
Social workers enhance human well-being	X	X

Capps et al. (2015) noted competencies needed for integrated social work practices in working with refugees. These coincided with those practiced by the participants (see Table 2). When questions related to service delivery, refugee resettlement, education, employment, health, housing, and advocacy were discussed by the group, responses were consistent. All participants agreed with positive service delivery in working with refugees.

Although service delivery is managed, there are gaps in services for refugees whose languages are rare. The gap in service for these groups was discussed. Language and cultural barriers are sometimes present in these instances. One participant emphasized that the need to “research the client’s culture before implementing services is

important.” It was stated that, “if the staff knew a little more of the refugee’s history, this will create a successful integration of social work practices.” Also, when working with a refugee client, and there is no shared language between the staff and client, there will be a lack of understanding of what is expected during the resettlement process. The refugee is also less likely to become successful in learning English, finding sustainable employment, and becoming independent in his new environment (Dubus, 2015).

Recruiting qualified social work staff to meet diverse linguistic needs can be difficult (Dubus, 2015). Hence, according to the research participants, “the agencies hire case aides that are linguistically aligned.” Therefore, the agencies are in agreement with the researchers when they take steps to ensure linguistic access for clients with limited English proficiency. One participant stated, “having guidance through an individual who is linguistically aligned with the refugee brings hope, trust, and initial instructions towards sustainability of community resources.” Hence, according to one participant, “there is rarely a case where we cannot assist or find assistance.” Another participant said, “that is why our agencies work together to share resources.”

The focus group participants unanimously agreed their efforts for compliance in integration services were adequate. They all agreed that the lack of literacy in the refugee’s first language made the integration services difficult. However, the services for education, employment, housing, healthcare, and advocacy were visible. Capps et al. (2015) discussed a lack of advocacy efforts. The researchers noted that providers needed

to solicit financial and political support. There was uncertainty if there were a standardized outcome measurement for all resettlement agencies.

Table 2 *Participant Competencies Compared to Capps*

Competencies	Capps et al. (2015)	Focus Group
Advocacy efforts		X
Case management	X	X
Creativity of resources	X	X
Culturally/Linguistically aligned	X	X
Employment guidance	X	X
Empowerment tools	X	X
Innovation of programming	X	X
Knowledge of resources	X	X
Language training	X	X
Reception/Accommodation	X	X
Standardized outcome measures	X	X

The findings in the research focus group were echoed in the Hardy (2016) for social workers and care providers serving refugees. The characteristics and competencies helped identify gaps in services as they relate to the research topic. The information gathered in this research can assist social workers and interns who seek to work with refugees. It gives a clear picture of specific competencies needed to improve and better serve individuals fleeing their countries and seeking refuge in the United States. Others can use the research as a blueprint for successful outcomes through integrative practices.

### **Impact on Clinical Social Work Practice**

The number of social workers in an integrative setting who serve migrants has increased over time (Garcia, 2016). Traditionally, those who worked with refugees have been those who shared their language. Researchers identified social workers as a key component to successful integrative services due to their diverse training (Haider, 2015). This research study corresponded to findings within the field (NASW, 2015, 2017) that illustrate a need for guiding principles when working with displaced individuals and families. The study also parallels the literature (Capps et al., 2015) that illustrates the need for consistent integrative techniques to better serve the refugee community.

NASW (2017) emphasized the need for cultural competency, sensitivity, and diversity among social workers in the field of refugee services. Training in these areas are “understood” by social workers. Further, the need for skills in cultural competency and sensitivity is understated. The curriculum for cultural competency is taught in the social work curriculum. However, integrated practices involving cultural competency and adaptation when working with the refugee population has just recently been added to the curriculum for social work professions (CSWE, 2019). Therefore, this specialized knowledge for assisting refugees creates a learning curve for many social work professionals.

An understanding of and the sensitivity to the refugee’s culture is essential. When unique characteristics were discussed in the focus group, the need to be culturally sensitive to the refugee population was at the forefront. Participants emphasized the need

to be “culturally competent and patient.” These characteristics can impact the refugee because without them, the refugee can feel as though the social worker has no respect for diversity. Social workers must comprehend diversity so that the refugee will not feel discriminated against. In an effort to reach the goal of reception and accommodation, the social worker must understand the refugee and have the ability to advocate on his/her behalf.

### **Recommendations for Social Work Practice**

Recommendations for social workers who serve refugees include investing in education and training to increase knowledge, cultural competency, and sensitivity among providers. It is also recommended that service organizations recruit social workers that have undergone specific training in working with displaced individuals. This educational support can be the building block or foundation needed so staff can better advocate, empower, and transform refugee clients into self-sufficient members of their new community.

Based on the findings of this study, another recommendation related to the problem statement is implementing educational support to social workers and other providers. The goal is to educate the staff on the importance of integrated practices in working with refugees, including cultural competency, sensitivity, and diversity. The social workers/care providers all agreed to lead discussions in the community with the local educational system, employers, hospitals, local government, etc. The group agreed that facilitating discussions on cultural competence, sensitivity, and diversity will benefit

the refugee population. Building positive relationships in the community will ensure awareness. Client awareness brings networking opportunities that can foster effective integration.

### **Impact on the Researcher**

This research study motivated the researcher to engage in cultural competency, sensitivity, and diversity efforts in the workplace. Assisting individuals in the helping profession to understand and respect the differences in all people is essential. Although I volunteered and worked on various efforts to ensure advocacy for refugees, this study encouraged me to advocate for the human rights of this population more than ever before. It also encouraged me to initiate intergroup dialogues to promote inclusion.

I considered going to the Dean of Social Work to advocate for a curriculum expansion to include cultural competency, cultural sensitivity, diversity, and immigration and refugee courses. Adding such coursework to the curriculum can assure the topics within this research are included at the undergraduate and graduate levels for aspiring social workers or social work interns.

### **Transferability of Findings**

Professional social work practices depend on the trustworthiness of research studies. Transferability was included in Section 3 of this research, as it illustrates the rationale for generalizing the study. The contextual data are related to focus group findings and the outcomes gathered in the literature. By ensuring participants are aware of their biases, transferability is strengthened. The data for the research was not based on

the traditional empirically-based scientific research. It was created by group participants in a focus group through discussion. Social workers' knowledge seemed to be based on practical experiences and case examples. Nami (2002) stated sharing social work knowledge, both 'knowing that' and 'knowing how', with other social workers and reflecting together on the knowledge and tradition that social workers carry defines and promotes the transferability of common and shared knowledge.

### **Usefulness of Findings**

Qualitative researchers theorize the effectiveness of research (Unite for Sight, 2015). The usefulness of research is determined by the ability to engage policymakers and other stakeholders to adapt to the research findings (Nami, 2002). If a research study deems to be effective, it will replicate methodologies, produce results that are verifiable by peers, and create knowledge that can be applied to real-world situations (Unite for Sight, 2015). The results of this research study can assist refugee service organizations in selecting appropriate staff for their refugee programs. Competencies can be evaluated and the need for further training can be identified. Results of this study can be used as a guide for assessing best practices.

### **Limitations**

Limitations of this research study were related to reliability and validity (Creswell, 2014). According to Rudestam & Newton (2015), the researcher is responsible for convincing oneself that the research study is based on critical investigation. Hence, there is no found test applied for reliability and validity. In this case, Patton (2002), states

given the purpose of the research study, the researcher must make a conscious effort in the focus group to present and communicate what the data reveals. The researcher reveals the data in the focus group was self-reported. Therefore, the data found can contain potential sources of bias.

### **Recommendations and Dissemination**

For social workers to better serve the needs of the refugee, the findings from this study strongly suggest that they continue to engage in cultural competence, sensitivity, and diversity workshops and other continuing education courses. It would also be helpful for them to begin a dialogue with their human resource officers and senior managers to adapt these competencies when hiring. Social workers should form task forces to assist in recruiting professionals that have a desire to work in the field of international social work. The characteristics that were identified in the focus group give a starting point for the traits required to be effective.

Another recommendation is to encourage social workers to become change agents in the refugee communities. The members of the focus group participated in refugee advocacy. In doing so, the social workers established rapport with community stakeholders. The benefit of these relationships is to find resources for their clients. Once the refugees are comfortable in their surroundings, they can focus on becoming self-sufficient in their community.

Other advocacy efforts can be achieved by educating the community. Refugee providers, as already mentioned, meet monthly at a Dallas Area Refugee Forum and

quarterly at a Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex meeting. Both of these settings would be an appropriate to share information about the results of this research. The Dallas Area Refugee Forum utilizes one of their meetings every quarter to advocate for refugees and educate local law enforcement and government officers and other stakeholders. This setting would be a venue to disseminate the information shared from this research. The researcher and focus group participants can be available to discuss the findings. Educating society on the contributions made by refugees would also create a positive view on the population. When the population is seen as an asset to society, there will be an increase in support of refugee resettlement. Support for the refugee population will open doors for integrated and successful social service practices.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The potential impact from the results of this research study can bring positive changes that will affect individuals, groups, and organizations. The improvement of resources, service delivery, and outcomes to services are ways to which the research can bring about change. Effects of the research involves the clients and the professional staff that work within various refugee program services. Here is where the characteristics and competencies of the social worker are called into questioned. Capps et al. (2015) suggested competency affects delivery of services and outcomes. Therefore, if the service is provided in a professional an ethical manner, the implementation of the service is effective and leads to a better outcome.

Groups of refugees fled their countries and were forced to migrate to the United States with the assistance of Bureau of Population, Refugee, and Migration. Social workers are called on to coordinate placing these individuals. Their service delivery is contingent on their level of cultural competency. The data collected in this study will assist in exploring and evaluating skills that can better serve the refugee community through integrated practices. Current and researched roles of the social worker can allow for future integrated service outcomes in working with migrants.

The organizational impact from this study identifies the social service skills needed to provide adequate and appropriate services to the refugee community. The focus group participants highlighted specific characteristics and competencies needed to serve this population. When robust techniques and skills are implemented, the organization will receive feedback on the quality services provided. These reports can increase awareness, which may serve more in the community, allow for additional funding options, and may attract social work professionals to the field of international social work.

Findings from this study can contribute to improved policy and integrated social work practices in the United States. Hence, emphasis was placed on serving displaced migrants as they resettle in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The intent of the study was to identify obstacles while serving the population to get a better perception of what is needed to implement effective programs (Capps et al., 2015).

## Summary

Refugees are individuals displaced from their home countries (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2017). The expectation of these individuals is that they can work and become self-sufficient following their resettlement. Case management and social services are critical in the refugee adjustment process. The guidance for this process depends on the social worker, who initiates the individual case plan (Papademetriou, 2017). Therefore, the social worker is the link to resources that will let the refugee succeed.

While seeking information for a more successful resettlement plan, I incorporated techniques from several areas of practice. The resettlement practice involves guidelines for reception and integration as an outcome to refugee programs. This encompasses good practices for managing the initial reception and placement for refugee families, preparing the host communities, English language training, education, employment, and addressing issues that may arise when meeting refugees' needs. When resettling refugees, the program must consider advance provisions, forecasting, and long-term commitment to ensure the programs are sustainable (UNHCR, 2017a). To provide culturally competent and proper services to refugees, social workers must understand the refugee experiences throughout the migration process. The journey's impact provides an overview on resettlement and adjustment in its totality. It is important for social workers to be educated on these experiences and to be prepared to advocate for this group of individuals.

Of the eight focus group participants, five years of experience was the average time spent exclusively in refugee resettlement. Eight of the eight were well-versed in the characteristics of a refugee. The group discussed the skills needed to serve refugees and educating them in the resettlement and employment process. According to one focus group participant, “a lot of time is wasted on teaching the obvious.” Therefore, each individual comes into the role with specific knowledge. One participant suggested social workers first understand the definition of a refugee, know the intent of the refugee resettlement process, the services needed to empower the refugee, and have some knowledge of cultural competency, cultural humility, cultural sensitivity, and diversity.

This researcher found that success with working with refugees in resettlement correlates highly with the social worker’s ability to integrate practices. The social worker must be perceptive of the culture, must understand the need for language acquisition and education, and must understand the expectation of self-sufficiency through employment that is mandated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (2017).

“Multiculturalism” is frequently used to describe how a society handles cultural diversity on the local and national level. Often, this word is misunderstood as it relates to cultural humility, cultural competency, cultural sensitivity, and diversity. As social workers use evidence-based practices that utilize the skills necessary to serve as an advocate for the refugee, it is important the social worker understands their refugee client, and the client’s background, and the issues the client endured in their homeland.

The focus group reviewed the key words handout for the meeting and frequently

used its terms (especially cultural humility, cultural competency, and cultural sensitivity). One focus group member suggested on several occasions that cultural “humility is even more important than cultural competency or cultural sensitivity.” It was noted that cultural humility should be the first skill acquired when working with refugees. This characteristic is distinctive because unlike cultural competency, it is ongoing.

Seeking appropriate English language skills and implementing job placement strategies are services specific to refugee resettlement. This includes English Language Instruction (ELI) for those with limited proficiency or referring refugees to classes where they will enhance their language skills. To better serve refugees with employment opportunities, social workers focus on building relationships with community stakeholders and employers. The idea is to maintain a positive relationship with community leaders, so that job placements and appointments will be easily found for refugees. When the social worker coordinates ELI coursework and employment, the refugee has a greater opportunity to grow in the community. Hence, the social worker navigates community resources to create successful resettlements.

Social workers employed in refugee programs within the Dallas/Fort Worth area support refugees and use specific characteristics and competencies as they fulfill their roles in refugee resettlement. The information gathered is supported by individuals who participated in a focus group in efforts to support the capstone project, *Integration of Social Work Practices with Refugees Migrating to the United States: An Action Research Study*. The use of action research provided the refugee provider agencies, the

stakeholders, and this student the data to improve the services of social workers that care for refugees.

The recommendations for disseminating the findings began with the social workers and their efforts to communicate the needs to the refugee organizations, community, schools, employers, etc. The intention is to disseminate the information through community groups such as the Dallas Area Refugee Forum and/or the Dallas Metroplex meeting, and will be asked to share the information to improve hiring efforts within their offices and for interns or volunteers beginning their work in the refugee resettlement field.

Capps et al. (2015) suggested bringing order to refugee programs by introducing integration. It is critical to enhance the effectiveness of these programs as the number of displaced migrants continues to increase. Refugee resettlement will be ongoing. Therefore, social workers must prepare themselves to cultivate a welcoming approach to help those that have no voice and cannot help themselves. After graduation, I intend to continue to support refugee resettlement. I will continue to research and seek innovative ways to making refugee transition to the United States healthy and positive.

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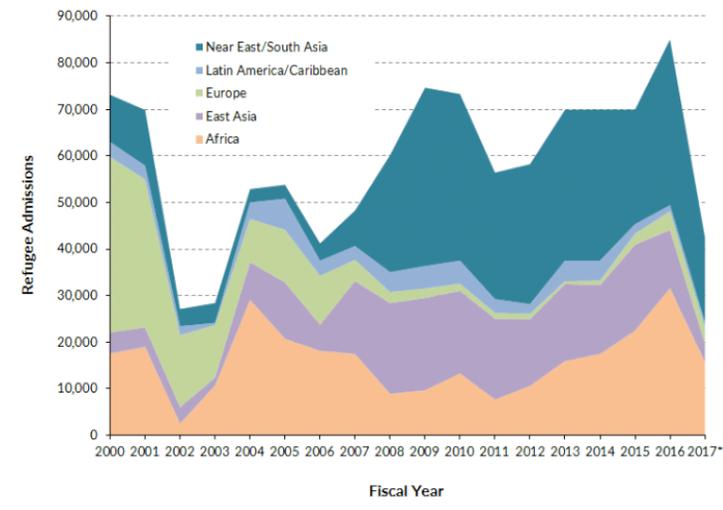
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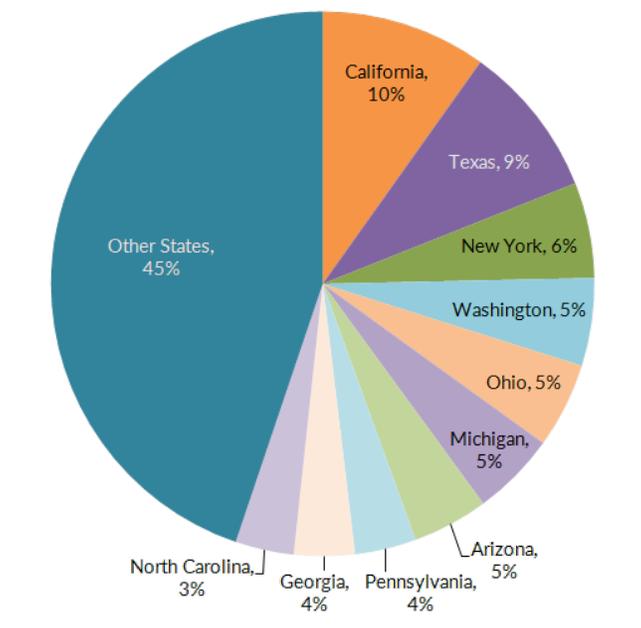
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**Figure 1.** U.S. Refugee Arrivals by Region of Nationality, FY 2000-17\*



**Figure 2.** U.S. Refugee Arrivals in States within the US, FY 2000-17\*



\* Data for FY 2017 are partial and refer to resettlement between October 1, 2016 and April 30, 2017.  
**Source:** MPI analysis of State Department WRAPS data.

## **Appendix A: Qualitative Research Questionnaire**

### **Integration of Social Work Practices with Refugees Migrating to the United States:**

#### **An Action Research Study**

Designed for Refugee Resettlement Service Providers in the United States

#### Introduction

1. How many years have you worked in the social service field?

1 – 3 years

4 – 6 years

7 – 9 years

10+ years

2. How many years have you worked in the field of refugee services?

1 – 3 years

4 – 6 years

7 – 9 years

10+ years

3. What department of refugee services do you work?

Resettlement

Education

Employment

Health

Housing

o Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you think you have the necessary tools needed to perform your job?

o Yes

o No

#### Service Delivery to Resettlement

5. Do you think cultural competency plays an essential role in the refugee's success, once they are resettled in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

#### Education

6. Do you believe the refugees are offered adequate information on the education system in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

#### Employment

7. Is it difficult to find work for refugees in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

#### Health

8. Are health care services easily accessible for refugee? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

#### Housing

9. Do you feel forming a centralization of housing in the urban areas of a city form a barrier to the integration of refugees? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

#### Advocacy

10. Have you participated in an advocacy effort to support refugees within the last 6 months? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

## Appendix B: Codebook Definitions

*Integration of Social Work Practices with Refugees**Migrating to the United States: An Action Research Study*

A1 1-3 years  
A2 4-6 years  
A3 7-9 years  
A4 10+ years

B1 1-3 years  
B2 4-6 years  
B3 7-9 years  
B4 10+ years

C1 Resettlement  
C2 Education  
C3 Employment  
C4 Health  
C5 Housing

D1 Yes  
D2 No

E1 Yes  
E2 No

F1 Yes  
F2 No

G1 Yes  
G2 No

H1 Yes  
H2 No

I1 Yes  
I2 No

J1 Yes  
J2 No





Appendix D: Discussion Guide

**Integration of Social Work Practices  
with Refugees Migrating to the United States:  
An Action Research Study**

Discussion Guide

- What is a refugee?
- Do you think refugees have a right to enter another country, to protect themselves and their families?
- Do you think it is difficult for the refugee to leave his country of origin?
- Do you know from which countries refugees migrate?
- Do you know which country a refugee migrates?
- How many refugees come to the United States each year?
- What is the process of resettlement?
- What are the demographics of refugees that resettle to your agency?
- Did you know much about refugees before your employment?
- Do you think you presently have the tools to serve refugees currently?
- Do you know the definition of integration?
- Do you think the refugees in your program are well integrated?
- If you had to refer to a gap in services for refugees, what would that be?

## Appendix E: Key Words / Social Work Terms - Handout

**Integration of Social Work Practices  
with Refugees Migrating to the United States:  
An Action Research Study**

**Handout**

***Key Words / Social Work Terms***

*refugee resettlement*  
*cultural competency*  
*cultural diversity*  
*cultural sensitivity*  
*social work ethics*  
*international social worker*  
*multiculturalism*  
*acculturation*  
*adaptation*  
*resettlement*  
*refugee education*  
*refugee employment*  
*refugee health care*  
*refugee housing*  
*approach*  
*the integration of refugees*  
*integration*  
*cultural ecogram*  
*the integration outcomes of refugees*  
*the inclusion of refugee communities*  
*social work roles in refugee resettlement*  
*evidence-based practices of social workers working with refugees*

*economic growth*  
*self-sufficiency*  
*social work practice*  
*refugee advocacy*  
*strategies*  
*assimilation*  
*cultural humility*

## Appendix F: Focus Group Interview Questions

### **Focus Group Interview Questions**

#### **Integration of Social Work Practices with Refugees Migrating to the United States: An Action Research Study**

1. What are some of the specific skills needed in working with refugees?
2. What successful approaches can be followed to educate social service professionals before assisting refugees?
3. What are some innovative practices used to help refugees transfer their employment experiences here in the United States?
4. What tools of practice do you use to connect refugees with health/mental health conditions to external resources?
5. What are some best practices in accessing housing for refugees?
6. What tools can be formed to educate various communities within the United States to dissipate stereotypes of refugees and assist them as newly arrived refugees to the United States?
7. What practices have you conducted or have witnessed in educating the local government (decision makers) on the needs of the refugees in their jurisdictions?

## Appendix G: Ground Rules

### **Ground Rules for the Focus Group**

The establishment of ground rules will help set expectations for the focus group.

1. Each participant is expected to be treated with dignity and respect.
2. Honest feedback is appreciated.
3. The focus group is a safe place. Confidentiality is practiced in this group. It is asked that each participant not share information discussed in this group, outside of this group.
4. Please respect the opinions of others.
5. Each individualized response is appreciated.
6. Please avoid sidebar conversations.
7. Participants are free to agree, to disagree.
8. Participants have the right to challenge and disagree during the discussion.
9. Participants have the right to question statements for clarity.