Development of Culturally Relevant Resources for Volunteers at World Relief Nashville

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**Literature Review**

**Who is a refugee?**
- A person owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 2015b)

**Barriers refugees encounter in resettlement**
- Cultural differences
- Difficulty in accessing health and social services
- Climatic differences
- Financial problems
- Illiteracy during resettlement
- Transportation (Barnett et al, 2009).

**Acculturation**
- The dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members (Berry, 2005).

**Studies with Karen refugees**
- Karen high school students were interviewed to determine acculturation patterns and perceptions of the U.S education system (Frairie, 2009)
- Case study of a female Karen refugee, Paw Law Eh, and how engagement in the meaningful occupation of traditional Karen weaving helped with identity and wellness (Smith, Stephenson, & Gibson-Satterwhaite, 2011)
- This study examined the obstacles that newly arrived refugees faced when trying to access healthcare and employment (Mitschke, D., Mitschke, A., Slater, & Teboh, 2011)

**Educational Resource Content**

**Facts About Refugees**
- By the end of 2014 there was an estimated total of 51.2 million forcibly displaced persons, and by mid 2015 it was estimated there are 15.1 million refugee (UNHCR, 2015a)
- The mid year trend for 2015 estimated that refugees in Burma are 458,400 persons (UNHCR, 2015a)
- The U.S Department of State and Bureau of Public Affairs of the U.S. will admit an estimated 85,000 refugees in 2016. Of that number, 34,000 will be from Near East and South Asia (Bureau of Public Affairs, 2015)

**Excerpts from Student Interviews**
- “I grew up with two religions. Sometimes I go to temple and sometimes to church. Parents are Christian, but I like to go to temple when I can.”
- “Karen shake hands but don’t like hugging unless close friends.”
- “Please know our history and some of our language. It makes us happy.”
- “Don’t use finger to tell people to come over. Use whole hand facing downward”
- “It is respectful to bow your head and acknowledge elders. No talking back.”
- “The language and getting around is hard. We walk a lot, but not within our community at first because we were downtown and it was scary. Now we have community here in south Nashville.”

**Implications for OT**
- Teach core skills to newly arrived refugees
- Help clients to overcome barriers to participation in their new communities
- Engage clients in culturally meaningful occupations
- Utilize cultural competence to facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation and client centered care
- Address occupational deprivation and occupational rights
- Support identity maintenance and facilitate well-being
- Produce further research on the importance of individual culture and occupations in the process of acculturation by occupational therapists
- Effective service provision is predicated upon obtaining information about refugees’ cultural practices and how those practices ameliorate challenges in the resettlement process (Benson, Sun, Hodge, & Androff, 2011)