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Refugee Integration in Spokane, Washington

Diploma Thesis

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Declaration

"I declare that I have written this thesis on my own and that i have cited all my sources in the list of sources."

In Olomouc 10. 11. 2016

Signature:.....

Aknowledgement

I would like to thank Mrs. Mgr. et Mgr Agnieszka Zogata Kusz because without her support this thesis would have never been written. I also want to thank my husband Cristian Jay Clark-Sojka for the grammar correction.

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Introduction

The United States is considered to be a nation of settlers and immigrants (Baršová, Barša, 2005, s.31) opened to new arrivals. This narrative is present from the early stages of the nation's creation and persists until today when the current administrative with president Obama in lead emphasizes the notion of nation built by those who fled being oppressed to search for new opportunities (Obama, 2014, Department of State, no date). Currently the estimate of United States Census Bureau for 2015 says, over 13% of the population is foreign born. However, for the topic of my thesis I have chosen to talk only about a very small group of immigrants, refugees.

The U.S. refugee resettlement program is the world's largest, accepting for the permanent resettlement around 70,000 refugees annually (UNHCR Population Statistics). For this year the planned number is even higher, reaching 85,000 people (U.S. Department of State, 2016). Usually the United States accept approximately half of the refugees who are permanently resettled that year worldwide (Capps et. al, 2015, pg.1).

In the first chapter of my thesis I will be addressing the overall problematic of refugee admission to the United States as I will introduce the evolution of refugee acceptance through the brief description of laws active at certain times. More deeply I will describe the current policy rooted in the Refugee Act of 1980. In the same chapter I will explain yet what it means to be a refugee according to laws of United States as well as I will define refugees within the larger group of immigrants. Although this group is rather small in comparison to the overall number of all immigrants, it is very diverse. For this very reason I will provide certain characteristics of refugees on arrival, such as their origin and language, level of education or basic demographic information regarding age or gender.

In the next chapter I will focus on integration as it is the core of the topic I have chosen. First of all I will describe current refugee integration policy. I will begin with the admission process as during this stage there are first attempts to prepare refugees for the future integration in the United States. This part will be followed by the introduction of stakeholders on both, the governmental and also the nongovernmental side and their

cooperation as they are the ones trying to fulfill the national integration policy goals through the programs facilitating the integration of refugees itself. Here I will also identify areas in which these actors promote the integration process and the overall approach they take considering the integration. I will also present there some of the critic opinions regarding this approach.

One of the goals of my thesis is to find out the role the World Relief plays in the National Refugee Resettlement Program. For this reason the following chapter will be dedicated to this organization. First of all, I will through its history show how it with time connected with the national policy. As it is a Christian-based organization, the vision mission and values described in the further sections of this chapter fully correspond with this faith and its history proves the intensions the organization has from its beginning.

To address my other goal, which is, finding out if the organization's affiliate in Spokane takes any extra efforts to support the successful integration over the recommended activities, I will focus more closely on this affiliate. After a brief introduction, I will look more closely into its programs and activities within these programs. I will compare it with the responsibilities the Organization has towards the national programs from which they receive funds.

In the last chapter of this thesis I will try to address my third and last goal, which is finding out how or if the activities of World Relief support the successful integration of refugees. For this purpose I will present a case study of one of its clients.

1. American Context

The narrative of America as an immigrant nation has been present from the very beginning of the state, yet it is used by those who are pro-immigration as well as those who are against it. In this chapter I would like to give a quick glance into the history of refugee acceptance policies in United States. I would like to also define refugees according to the current U.S. law definition and identify them within the large group of immigrants and compare the refugees with asylees as often these two terms get confused.

1.1. History of Refugee Admission and Integration

“This country was built by people who fled oppression and war, leapt at opportunity, and worked day and night to remake themselves in this new land. The refugees who arrive in the United States today continue this tradition, bringing fresh dreams and energy and renewing the qualities that help forge our national identity and make our country strong.”

Barack Obama June 20, 2014

Even though, as in his statement on the World Refugee Day in 2014, it is possible to say that the people arriving in United States from the beginning of state, could be considered refugees by today's definition, the first refugee legislation in United States did not come before 1948 as a response to displacement of millions of people cause by World War II (Brown, Scribner, 2014, pg. 101, Mossaad, 2016 pg.2). In the Refugee and Asylee annual flow report for 2014, Mossaad lists the legislations passed with the time regarding the refugees. For this chapter, I want to follow this path and describe how the refugee admission and integration evolved in time keeping Mossaad's timeline.

1.1.1. Displaced Person Act of 1948 and 1950

This law was passed in response to the displacement of large mass of people caused by World War II. It was an emergency legislation for the admission of 200,000 respectively 400,000 people who were non-repatriable displaced persons. More than 70 percent of them were either stateless people or expatriates of newly-communist countries who did not want to repatriate into Soviet-dominated states or were from USSR (Chiba, 2014, pg. 10). There were also people of German origin who were expelled from other European countries (Brown, Scribner, 2014 pg. 101., Genizi, 1994, pg. 75)

This act was passed in the period of strict immigration policy following the 1924 immigration law, which set ceiling of 150,000 immigrants per year plus it had a per country quota applied. In situation like this it was a challenge to convince the congress to pass a law allowing 400,000 people. Yet, thanks to a successful cooperation of Protestants, Jews and Catholics in lobbying, it was achieved. This cooperation, even though not smooth at the time, created an example which would be followed in future (Genizi, 1994, pg. 89).

It was the first time the country recognized in its laws its responsibility to support some of the world's refugees. It established the Displaced Persons Commission to supervise and coordinate the resettlement and also set the role of voluntary agencies in the process as it contained provisions which allowed them to oversee the process on case-by-case basis and also allowed them to become a refugee's "sponsor" granting housing and employment without which they would not be allowed into the country (Chiba, 2014, pg. 13-14).

1.1.2. Refugee Relief Act of 1953

As the Displaced Person Program was only a temporary and it was coming to its end, the faith groups started to lobby for its continuation. As a result of this pressure, and probably also as a part of Cold War Strategy where the escapes from Eastern Block were

considered a proof of the Western political and ideological supremacy, The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 was passed (Daniels 2004 in Chiba 2014, pg. 10, Chiba, 2014, pg.16, 18).

It authorized the admission of over 200,000 refugees mostly from Eastern Europe (Chiba, 2014, pg. 10). As under this Act the Displaced Person Commission did not exist anymore, the administration was transferred to regular immigration channels. As per the responsibility of voluntary agencies in refugee resettlement, that stayed the same. While the organs composed of the different religious group's representatives kept their role of coordinators, local churches were expected to take responsibility for the integration (Chiba, 2014, pg. 17). Furthermore the agencies through their shared organization lobbied for adoption of permanent legislation (Chiba, 2014, pg.18).

Even though, there has been a few more laws passed, all of them continued to be ad-hoc until the Refugee Act of 1980 (Brown, Scribner, 2014, pg. 102). Just to name, there has been a 1960 Fair Share Act which permitted the Justice Department to use parole status to admit higher number of refugees following the Cuban events; the 1962 Migration and Refugee Assistance Act which released funds for urgent refugee and migration needs; the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act which set a quota for refugees to 6 percent of overall annual visa issues; the 1975 Migration and Refugee Act which allowed approximately 200,000 refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to enter the United States after the events in Vietnam. Still others that allocate some funds for refugee support, it also established the cooperation of Department of State and, what was then called, Director or Health, Education and Welfare (Congressional Digest, 2016, pg.3, Brown, Scribner 2014, pg. 105).

1.1.3. Refugee Act of 1980

All the previous ad-hoc policies prepared the ground for the final look of the permanent law passed in 1980. This act is for the purpose of my thesis the most important as it is the one which is still a core of today's policies. It was enacted to comply with the

1967 United Nations Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, which was ratified by United States in 1968 (Mossaad, 2016, pg. 2).

In section 101 (b) of this act, the objectives of this law are stated as following :”[...] to provide a permanent and systematic procedure for the admission to this country of refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States, and to provide comprehensive and uniform provisions for the effective resettlement and absorption of those refugees who are admitted.” To fulfil its objectives, the admission process which was evolving since the World War II was established. The law also sets the numerical limitation specifying, that the number of refugees accepted cannot exceed 50,000 unless President after the consultation with Congress does not determine otherwise, justifying it by humanitarian concerns or national interest (sec 207 (a)).

Furthermore, in sec. 411 of the Act, Office of Refugee Resettlement is established within the Department of Health and Human Services. Its function is to fund and administer programs of federal government. In following sections of law, the principles of funding are determined together with the relationship of federal, state and non-profit voluntary agencies concerning the sponsorship process and intended distribution of refugees among States and localities. Also areas of programs which are to be created are named - such as Orientation, Education, and Job Training programs as well as English Training. This is going to be further described in the chapter 2 of my thesis together with the actual practical effect of this law.

1.2. Defining the Refugees

To fully understand the nature of refugee integration I would like to briefly address this group within the larger group of immigrants. I would also like to distinguish refugees and asylees as the difference quite often is not clear to those who are not deeper interested in US law, furthermore, the support to refugees and asylees in United States slightly differs. I will furthermore describe the refugee group using the statistical data and articles analyzing them to present the diversity of the group as it influences the abilities of the resettlement agencies to assist refugees and promote the successful integration.

1.2.1. Immigrants

According to US Census Bureau (2016), it is estimated that in 2015 the foreign born population stood at over 43 million people, which is more than 13 percent of the total population. This group consists of both illegal and legal immigrants. As per Baker's and Rytina's (2012, pg.2) estimates published by Department of Homeland Security, the number of illegal immigrants in 2012 was approximately 11.5 million, at that time it created approximately one fourth of immigrants (US census bureau, 2013). A majority came from Latin America.

The other three quarters of immigrants consist of legal immigrants: lawful permanent residents, asylees and refugees (Baker, Rytina, 2012 pg. 1). As refugees are obligated to apply for a permanent residency after one year of stay in United States and asylees can apply for it as well, it is very difficult to decode how many are there within this number. But just for illustration, since the 1975 until 2015, there has been 3,252,493 refugees resettled in United States. As you can see, in compare to 43 million of immigrants living in United States now days, it is a very low number (Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, 2015, no page)

1.2.2. Asylum Seekers x Refugees

The difference in definition between refugee and asylee in a law of United States is that a Refugee obtains its status while still outside of United States, while asylum seeker is either already in United States or at U.S. the port of entry. Yet both have to fulfill the conditions as per definition of refugee set in 101(a) (42) Immigration and Nationality Act (A):

“any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country

because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion”

This Act also makes it possible for a President to designate countries whose nationals may be processed for refugee status within their respective countries. In 2014 this was made possible for example for certain nationals of Iraq or Cuba. And the in-country processing can be also possible if the ambassador requests it for extraordinary individual protection (Mossaad, 2016, pg. 1-2)

The mayor difference we can see between asylum seekers and refugees is then not coming from the definition but from their access to support. Refugees come to United States with their status already approved, while asylum seekers need to prove it. The asylum is granted after the adjudication at the asylum office or immigration courts and this process can take several months or in some cases even years (Harris, 2016, pg. 34) after the asylum status is approved, a person starts to be called an asylee.

This in practice means that while refugee is from the moment of entry eligible for public assistance and benefits as well as employment authorization at the same time none of that is reachable for asylum seeker. Furthermore, refugees are matched with resettlement agency which provides them with basic needs (in more detail described in chapter 2), and maybe even more importantly, the case manager supports them with navigation through the system to make sure the refugee is aware of what benefits and assistance they might be able to receive. While asylee, even after they have been granted asylum, do not have such assistance granted. They must either find the resettlement agency that receives funding from Office of Refugee Resettlement that would be willing to assist them, or they have to figure out the benefits system on their own (Harris, 2016, pg. 44-47).

This distinguishing is important because in this thesis I will be addressing solely the group of Refugees, for this reason, I would like to summarize the differences between Refugee and Asylee one more time. When the person seeking international protection is still outside of the United States, at the time of his or her application, he is called Applicant for Refugee Status. Such person is not allowed to enter United States until his status has been approved. Once it is approved, he or she is called a refugee. On the other side, person

who enters United States and after that applies for the protection is called Asylum Seeker. Once his or her status has been approved, he or she is called asylee.

1.3. Refugees in United States

Refugees resettled in United States are very diverse group. In this chapter, I would like to demonstrate this diversity by presenting some of their characteristics at arrival. I am choosing the ones I consider important in relation to either integration itself or those, which pose the challenges to assisting organizations.

1.3.1. Origin and language

According to Capps et al (2014, pg. 1):”The nationalities represented among new arrivals rose from 11 in 1980 to 64 in 2013”. This change is due to efforts of United States government to respond to refugee crisis over the world as well as shifting away from the Cold War policy when large numbers of refugees were received from small number of locations (US Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, department of Health and Human Services, 2015, pg.3) And as per Department of Homeland security.

In 2014, there were a total of 69,975 refugees resettled to the United States, over 67 percent of them came from Asia and 25 percent from Africa. The highest number of refugees came from Iraq (19,769), Burma (14,598) Somalia (9,000) and Bhutan (8,434). These are the only countries where the number of refugees accepted is so significant, from the rest of the countries, the refugees accepted count usually in tens or hundreds just in few more they reach thousands (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016, pg. 40). This growing national diversity brings also higher language diversity.

As per Capps et.al (2015, pg. 9), in fiscal year 2013, there were 162 native languages spoken among refugees. Even though it is possible that many of them speak also other, more common languages, it still poses a challenge for resettlement agencies as some

of the services need to be provided in “culturally and linguistically appropriate manner”. Not only it is often difficult to find an appropriate translator, but it is also costly (Capps et al., 2015 pg. 11).

1.3.2. Education level and literacy

Education level differs greatly between the different nationalities of refugees. As per Capps et al. (2015, pg. 19) according to a data from 2009-2011, refugees which had the best education rates were from Russia, where over 60 percent, both male and female, had at minimum Bachelor’s degree, Iran and Ukraine, followed with around 50 percent of higher education completion. Refugee group with the lowest education rates were from Burma and Bhutan, where around 50 percent of arrivals did not have a high school degree. Yet, the high education does not necessarily means also better job opportunities as will be further discussed in chapter 2.

Relatively high numbers of refugees from certain nationalities are illiterate even in their native language (Cappset al, 2015, pg. 2). According to Capps et al (2015, pg. 2)”Among refugees arriving from Burma, Bhutan, Liberia, and Somalia in 2004-13 half of fewer were literate in their primary language”. This further affects their integration as it makes even harder to learn English (Capps et al, 2015, pg.14)

1.3.3. Age and Gender

Over 35 percent of refugees were less than 18 years old while only 3.6 percent were over 65 years old. As per Mossaad (2016, pg. 4):” Refugees are, on average, younger than the U.S. native-born population. In 2014, the median age of refugees arriving in United States was 24 years; in contrast, the median age of native-born population in 2014 was 37 years.” Most of refugees were then in a productive age. According to Capps et al. (2015, pg. 9) age can influence the integration outcomes: “[...] refugee groups with more children

and fewer adults might be expected to have lower incomes and greater reliance on social benefit. But in longer term, [...] children will almost certainly have more opportunities than adults to complete additional education and develop stronger English language skills.”

Tab. 1: Refugees arriving 2014 by age	
under 1 year	96
1 to 4 years	6,619
5 to 9 years	7,361
10 to 14 years	6,616
15 to 19 years	6,794
20 to 24 years	7,304
25 to 29 years	7,878
30 to 34 years	6,730
35 to 39 years	4,960
40 to 44 years	4,263
45 to 49 years	3,094
50 to 54 years	2,518
55 to 59 years	1,801
60 to 64 years	1,391
65 and over	2,550
total	69,975

Source: 2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, Office of Immigration Statistics

From 69,975 refugees resettled in the United States in 2014, just above 52 percent were men. As the data from 2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics show, only 25 percent of females and 28 percent of males came single. There is a slight discrepancy between the number of principal applicants coming with spouses and those claiming being married (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2014). This can be caused by separation during the travel or by leaving spouse behind, but the data regarding this are not available.

Regarding one of the goals for integration, the early employment, Koyama (2015, pg. 267) claims, that women are more likely to be offered a job or being promoted within a company based on gender stereotypes and culturally-defined gender roles. She proves this theory on a study of refugee women working in food industry in United States. Furthermore, she also claims that women with young children are often disadvantaged Not only, that woman have overall lower economic well-being than men (Potocky-Tripodi 2004 in Koyoma 2015, pg. 261) Yet, as Koyoma (2015, pg. 261) states “women with young children are often discouraged from enrolling in the training” giving an example where a English learning program was meant only for men in families with small children.

Tab. 2: Characteristics of refugees on arrival				
	Total	Principal applicants	Spouses	Children
Male	36,767	20,028	1,970	14,769
Female	33,208	10,449	9,409	13,350
Total	69,975	11,379	28,119	28,119

Married	26,168	14,787		
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Source: 2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, Office of Immigration Statistics

2. Current Refugee Integration Policy

In this chapter, I would like to give a glance into the refugee integration policy. I will start by brief description of the admission process into the United States as it provides us with the notion of how big and diverse group we are talking about as it leads to future challenges during the integration process. At this stage there are already present some activities which should ease the integration process for refugees while in United States. It is also possible to enter the United States and apply for asylum, but as was discussed in the chapter one, the integration process for these cases differs. Then I will introduce the role of federal and nongovernmental actors involved in resettlement and integration. I will address the policy with its main goals, their achievements and also the challenges for the integration process.

2.1. Resettlement

Before addressing the integration itself, it is necessary to understand the refugee admission as it leads us to understanding the diverse nature of this group, and the situation they have come from. This diversity later on influences the process of refugee integration. The Resettlement Program of United States is the largest in the world. In recent years, it aimed to resettle between 70,000 and 80,000 individuals per year (Capps, et.al. 2015, pg.5). The proposed number for the 2017 is reaching up to 110,000 (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (a), 2016, table 1.) The number of refugees recommended to be accepted for each fiscal year is set by the president of United States after a consultation with Congress (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg.3).

The resettlement has several steps which the refugee needs to take before he or she is able to enter the United States. The average processing time is between 18 to 24 months, but as every case is different, the times differ also (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (b), 2016).

2.1.1. Choosing the eligible

Most refugees are referred to the United States by United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees with which they have registered in the country to which they have fled (U.S. Department of State (a), no date). This is called the P-1 processing and in 2014, 43 percent of individuals were admitted this way (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2014, pg. 3).

Occasionally, the refugee can be referred also by a U.S. Embassy or a specially trained nongovernmental organization. This is so called P-2 processing. In 2014, 55 percent of refugees were admitted through this passage (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2014, pg. 3). The last option is to contact directly one of nine Resettlement Support Centers. That can happen in case the person has close relatives among the asylees and refugees already in the United States or “belongs to a specific groups set forth in statute or identified by the Department of State as being eligible for direct access to the program” (U.S. Department of State (a) , no date). It is called P-3 processing and in 2014, less than half percent of refugees were processed this way (Office of Immigration Statistics 2014, pg. 3). In this thesis I am not going to describe the direct access to more detail as it is not necessary for the purpose of this thesis.

2.1.2. Case preparation

Once a referral is made, a Resettlement Support Center funded and managed by The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration prepares the case for presentation to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2013). As per 2015 there were 9 of these centers one in each region of interest: Africa, Austria, Cuba, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, Turkey and Middle East and Eurasia. These sites are usually run by an international humanitarian or religious organization. The purpose of these centers is to help the refugee and his/her family prepare their case file – taking photos, collecting information, scheduling of

interviews, requesting background checks, etc. (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2013).

2.1.3. Background check and Medical check

A third step before entering the United States is the review of all the provided information by officers from the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. All applicants are then interviewed by an immigration officer, who adjudicates the case. If successful, the refugee sees a doctor to undergo medical exams to identify medical needs and to ensure that those with a contagious disease, such as tuberculosis, do not enter the United States. All these meetings are scheduled with a help of Resettlement Support Centre again (U.S. Department of State (a), no date)

2.1.4. Cultural Orientation

The last step to prepare refugees for resettlement is giving them Cultural Orientation lessons. The length of these lessons varies profoundly depending on a region where the refugees came from and Resettlement Support Centre providing it. Just as an example, the Cuban center only provides the 2 or 3 hour lesson, on contrary the Middle East and North Africa center has the lessons for 20 hours (Cultural Orientation Resource Exchange, 2015).

2.1.5. A flight to USA

When the refugee fulfills all these requirements, he or she is ready to enter the United States. The Department of State cooperates with nine domestic resettlement agencies. As per U.S. Department of State ((b) no date),:“Every week, representatives of each of these nine agencies meet to review the biographic information and other case

records sent by the overseas Resettlement Support Centers to determine where a refugee will be resettled in the United States”. These U.S. based resettlement agencies also provide the sponsorship assurance (U.S. Department of State (b), no date).

The Information about the resettlement agency is then sent back to the original Resettlement Support Center. This center then cooperates with the International Organization for Migration on transportation of the refugee to his or her new home. (U.S. Department of State (b), no date). As stated on U.S. Department of State ((b), no date pages: “The cost of refugee transportation is provided as a loan, which refugees are required to begin repaying after they are established in the United States”

2.2. Federal - nongovernmental cooperation

For the United States, it is very typical the major role of nongovernmental organizations and their cooperation with the state. As you could have already seen above, the cooperation is established from the early stages of resettlement as the federation agencies fund the activities provided by the nongovernmental international organizations. After the refugee arrives to the United States, the pattern stays the same. National agencies, throughout their programs provide funds for the activities leading to refugee integration. These activities are run by selected nine U.S.-based agencies in about 350 affiliates. It also coordinates meetings with the US based resettlement organizations (US Department of State, 2016).

In this section, I would like to provide an overview of actors participating in the integration process. I want to introduce the federal agencies, their programs and the linkage with the activities of the resettlement agencies and their local affiliates.

2.2.1. Federal Agencies

There are three federal agencies involved in the refugee resettlement process and integration. One of them is the Department of Homeland Security, which approves refugees for admission to the United States, but since core topic of this thesis is the integration and

this agency is not involved in it in further stages, I am not going to go into the details of its work.

More important for my goal are the other two agencies, which both aim to provide the refugees with the base for successful integration even when their programs provide only short term assistance (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 31). One of them is the State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration which provides funding to for the refugees for initial 30 to 90 days after arrival under its Reception and Placement Program. It provides the total amount of \$1,850 per refugee to local affiliate of resettlement agency (Office of the Spokesman, 2010). As can be seen, this is not very large amount of money considering it should last for up to 3 months. For this reason the local organizations are supposed to combine it with private resources (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 7). During this period the accommodation, food, clothing, and other immediate necessities are covered. As after the 90 day period, this support is no more available. The goal is to have refugees economically self-sufficient as soon as possible (Capps, 2015, pg. 348).

The third federal organization involved in a process is the Department of Health and Human Services with its Office of Refugee Resettlement from which the refugee can receive up to eight months of cash assistance, medical assistance, and most importantly employment and citizenship services for up to 5 years. This agency funds these services through refugee coordinators who are either employed by state agency or by nonprofit organization. This depends on how each state within the federation has its program set up. (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 7-8)

In recent years there have been major complaints about the value of the funds provided. Even a US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in its 2010 report concluded that "resettlement efforts in many US cities are underfunded, overstretched, and failing to meet the basic needs of the refugee populations" and recommended that "the federal government do more to support and resource the local communities" (US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 2010, pg. 1). And as Brown and Scribner (2014, pg. 110) state in their article: "The arrival of large numbers of refugees paired with the failure of the federal government to adequately fund the domestic refugee programs can place strain on

receiving communities. Backlash against the refugee resettlement program has become more pronounced in recent years in the context of high unemployment and budget shortfalls.”

Other than the funding, these two federal agencies also play a monitoring role and a role of coordinator. Both agencies conduct on site checks, annually on national level and every five years on affiliate level. They also request the check of affiliates within the organization every three years (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 25-26). Other than these on site checks, they also require the records from all the resettlement agencies. The Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration focuses more on a quality of services provided while the Office of Refugee Resettlement focuses more on performance outcomes, such as employment rates and cash assistance terminations (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg.26)

Quarterly, they conduct a joint consultation meeting with stakeholder groups, including voluntary agencies, state refugee coordinators, refugee health coordinators, Office of Refugee technical assistance providers and ethnic community based organizations (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg.10)

2.2.2. The U.S. based resettlement agencies

There is total of 9 U.S. based resettlement agencies¹ with about 350 affiliates (US Department of State, 2016). These agencies propose to State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration the number of refugees, their affiliates will have capacity to resettle. Each of these agencies has its own inside channels to discuss specific community capacity. Refugee Council USA composed of these nine organizations, made a list of things to be considered when deciding about the number of refugees the community is able to absorb and organization would be able to serve. Some of these parameters are employment

¹ Church World Service, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants and World Relief.

opportunities, affordable housing availability, public transportation, number of co-sponsors, language ability of staff, volunteer numbers etc. Local affiliates are not required to use this list and each can take a different approach (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 12).

The majority of resettlement agencies are faith-based. As per 2010 estimate, 70 per cent of refugees arriving to United States are served directly by a faith-based agency and even the secular agencies often utilize local church networks to recruit volunteers, gather resources and provide ongoing support for refugees they work with (Eby, et al., 2010, pg. 591)

In recent years these organizations are under considerable pressure caused by insufficient federal funding and also by the backlash against the resettlement itself (Brown, Scribner, 2014, pg. 111). This financial shortage makes it much more difficult to address the needs of Refugees. In its 2008 study, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service published results of its cost analysis of the refugee resettlement services required by the Department of State in regard to Reception and Placement program. It found that the federal funds cover only 39 percent of the total cost during this 90 day period. The rest of expenses need to be covered by private donations, volunteer work and direct contributions (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, 2008, pg. 9-10) And also the funding for services to refugees from the Office of Refugee Resettlement is stagnating as it hasn't grown in almost 25 years (Capps, et al. 2015, pg. 6)

Organizations in their effort to serve refugees also face other challenges as the refugee group is getting over time more diverse. As Capps et al. state in their report (2015, pg. 1): “the nationalities represented among the new arrivals rose from 11 in 1980 to 64 in 2013, and the number of primary languages spoken rose from 114 in 2004 to 162 in 2013.

2.3. Integration

There are many different definitions of integration, for instance, in their article; C. Teixeira and W. Li claim that there are several basic needs which need to be fulfilled to

consider the integration successful. Among them there is affordable housing in a safe neighborhood and in welcoming community, access to good education, employment with adequate level of income and successful social and cultural integration (Teixeira, Li, 2009, pg. 222) To its report to congress, the United States Government Accountability Office defined integration as a “multidimensional process in which newcomers and the receiving communities intentionally work together, based on shared commitment to acceptance and justice, to create a secure, welcoming, vibrant and cohesive society” and this definition was also accepted by an Office for Refugee Resettlement integration working group, even though it was not accepted as an official definition within the whole agency (Government Accountability Office, 2012. pg. 31-32). And finally, the White House sets the three main interconnected pillars of the integration as civic, economic and linguistic integration (The White House, 2014).

According to all three federal agencies, their programs are facilitating the integration. Yet as we will be able to see, it emphasizes mostly its economic part which is widely criticized. This approach is anchored in the legal system, precisely, in the US Refugee Act of 1980. This act sets the overall direction for both the federal agencies and the resettlement organizations as:

[...] make available sufficient resources for employment training and placement in order to achieve economic self- sufficiency among refugees as quickly as possible (1)(A)(i); provide refugees with the opportunity to acquire sufficient English language training to enable them to become effectively resettled as quickly as possible (ii); and ensure that cash assistance is available to refugees in such manner as not to discourage their economic self-sufficiency (iii)

By passing this law, and especially it’s adjustment in 1982, where, by removal of the period when the refugee could not be employed, the policy shifted definitely to the early employment direction (Brown, Scribner, 2014, pg. 106). Which in a result let to the opportunities for refugees to become accustomed to their new home, to find a job appropriate to their skills and access to services which could lead to long-term outcome abated (Brick et al. 2010, pg. 11). Moreover, as Ott claims, this approach overlooks the psycho-social and cultural integration completely (Ott, 2011, pg. 10)

In the 2015 report published by Migration Policy Institute, the chapter about the integration outcomes unfortunately doesn't mention anything about the civic part as the report follows the main path of the mainstream policy (probably also due to a data available) and builds mostly on economic indicators. It describes the integration outcomes in the categories of employment, spoken language proficiency, educational attainment, household income and public benefit receipt.

For me, all three pillars, civic, economic, and language, which should be involved in the integration are important and I would like to address them in following sections.

2.3.1. Employment

As per the Migration Policy Institute data, overall, the employment rate of refugee men is higher than the employment rate for US born men and women are as likely to work as US born women. By this, the Refugee Resettlement Program's goal of promoting early employment is considered to be achieved (Capps et al. 2015, pg. 12, 16, 29).

But as the report looks in the numbers more closely, it shows that employment rates vary between certain groups. The differences between men and women employment rates within the refugee group explains Koyama (2014, pg. 259) by the "constraints imposed by their limited English-language ability, lack of formal education, initial lack of socio-economic connections, culturally-defined gender roles, and gender stereotypes".

The explanation of differences among the different ethnic groups then also involves lower education and /or language proficiency. As the report shows, there is certain correlation between the refugee camp experience and low literacy rates, but it is uncertain if it is as a result of insufficient education provided in camps or if its roots are in the education systems and traditions in country of origin (Capps, et. al, 2015, pg. 15-16)

Among other challenges refugees face in a process of achieving the early employment is also their physical and mental health as the group includes those who have experienced severe trauma or physical injury (Brown, Scribner, 2014 pg.107, Government

Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 6). So as we can see, even if the overall policy goal is being achieved, it is clear the approach doesn't work for everyone. And as I will outline in following section, even for those who find the job it doesn't necessarily mean a success.

For instance, in her article, L. M. Harris, presents the survey on the asylee integration in United States including the effects of this policy. She claims that this system is rigid and not made to suit the refugees and asylees needs (L.M. Harris, 2016, pg. 41). As an example she presents a case of a lady from West Africa who had her biology degree and worked as a high school teacher before fleeing her country of origin. Since in United States doesn't exist any clear and affordable way to convert her biology degree and she had a limited English knowledge, a local resettlement agency matched her with a job in a factory, where she worked night shifts for a minimum wage and with a two hour commute home. She ended up caught in a situation where she was only able to cover her family's basic needs without the free time which could be used for language improvement or better job search left (L.M. Harris, 2016, pg. 43-34).

It is clear; it is not a unique case as other authors see this problem also. Capps et al. (2015, pg. 6) claim that the programs of Office of Refugee Resettlement focus too heavily on immediate employment instead of trying to obtain better job matches, especially for refugees with higher education. Similarly Koyoma (2014, pg. 261) agrees that the objective of making refugees self-sufficient as quickly as possible "funnels all the refugees into short-term vocational and career training programmes that ready them for minimum wage positions" This lack of funds and time within which refugees receive support creates also the frustration among the service providers as it doesn't allow them to emphasize the training and skill development more (Capps et al. 2015, pg. 6).

Furthermore, refugees are obligated to accept the first employment offered to them as according to a 45 CFR, § 400.82 failure or refusal to accept employability services or employment leads to termination of refugee cash assistance.

Even the United States Government Accountability Office (2012, pg. 29-30) in its report to congress admits, that the situation is partially fueled by the Office of Refugee Resettlement performance measures which encourage service providers to focus on short-term outcomes, such as employment rates at six or eight months after arrival only. This

results to one-size-fits-all approach and the condition when providers' flexibility to provide services from which the refugee could benefit from after the six or eight months is very limited. As they state: "For example, when assisting refugees who arrive with college degrees and professional experience, service providers may not help them earn a credential valid in the United States, because the providers' effectiveness is measured by whether the refugee is employed" Problematic is also that the skill certification training cannot exceed one year and during that period the refugee is also required to be employed. And as obtaining credentials may require extra training, it is not easy to achieve it while working.

By all this, refugees are pushed to accept low profile jobs, which also lead to lower wages. This might seem in a slight contradiction of the employment purpose which should lead to self-sufficiency. But as the definition is following: "Economic self-sufficiency means earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant." (45 C.F.R. § 400.2, 2016), it doesn't affect if the refugee receives other types of public assistance, such as Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 27)

2.3.2. Language skills

The connection of language skills with successful civic and economic integration is clear as shown in the White House fact sheet regarding the federal role in immigrant and refugee integration: "English language acquisition is vitally important for new Americans to integrate into their communities. The ability to understand and communicate in English has a significant impact on an immigrant's ability to find a job, advance in a career and become civically active in his or her community." (The White House, 2014)

The study about the integration outcomes of U.S. Refugees clearly shows how the language is a critical criterion in job search as the limited language skills lead to employment with lower income. (Capps et al., 2015, pg. 2)

The number of refugees, who at the arrival had at least some knowledge of English, has risen from 25 percent in 2004-2007 periods to 33 percent in 2008- 2013, as English is

used worldwide in business and education, nevertheless, the percentage of those who speak good English remains only at about 7 percent. The proficiency varies profoundly depending on the refugees' nationalities (Capps et al, 2015, pg.11-12). This unfortunately leaves over 60 percent of refugees entering the United States without the sufficient English knowledge, so much needed for the work acquisition and overall integration to the new society.

Following the 2007 Government Accountability Office recommendation, language was integrated to all the grant announcements by Office of Refugee Resettlement (Government Accountability Office, 2012, pg. 51). Part of the language training expenditures comes also from the individual state budgets and private sector. But despite this fund combination it is still insufficient to cover all the hours of adult English instruction necessary (McHugh, Challinor, 2011, pg. 5). The language instructions are provided through community colleges, local schools districts, private educational institutions, NGOs and businesses working with both private and public funds (McHugh, Challinor, 2011, pg. 2). Also the Department of State took action and started pilot programs in Kenya, Thailand and Nepal which provide refugees with opportunity to improve their language skills prior their arrival in pre-departure English classes (Capps et al, 2015, pg. 12)

As McHugh and Challinor (2011, pg. 2-3) claim: "Most language programs provide "survival skills" classes that introduce immigrants to the host language and attempt to foster some degree of conversational fluency." But as they argue afterwards and as the language knowledge is also viewed to be a step towards achieving economic self-sufficiency, these "umbrella language courses" do not seem to be sufficient as they do not provide the knowledge relevant for the work and the interactions required on the job. They recommend to expand language instruction contextualize for workplace use and give as an example few programs when this approach was proved successful. Highly valued is for example the 'Integrated Basic Education and Skill Training', a program implemented in Washington State, which allows the participants to obtain certified workforce training and English language courses simultaneously. It provides also additional services, such as child care, part-time learning or assistance with transportation, linked with the notion that the adult language learners needs differ from traditional students. The contextualized Language

Instruction approach is also successful in areas of hospitality industry and office positions where, together with learning some technical knowledge leads to obtainment of better paid jobs (McHugh and Challinor, 2011, pg. 4)

Even though most refugees improve their English language over time, and according to the Department of State ((b), undated):“Based on years of experience, the U.S. refugee resettlement program has found that people learn English and begin to function comfortably much faster if they start work soon after arrival”, the percentage of those with limited English proficiency stays relatively high even after several years of residency in Unites States – at 58 percent (Capps et al. 2015 pg. 355). The limitation to learn the language can be caused by lack of literacy in a first language as it indicates lower educational attainment which is needed for obtaining new skills. (Capps, et al, 2015, pg. 354)

2.3.3. Civic Integration

As per the Department of State ((b) no date): “After one year, refugees are required to apply for permanent residence (commonly referred to as a green card) and after five years in the United States, a refugee is eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.” In its factsheet about the federal role in immigrant and refugee integration, the White House (2014) states, that this civic integration provides the people with the assurance of their rights and liberties.

So how do the rights and responsibilities change when one becomes a permanent resident? First of all it is important to know, that with refugee status, people are granted the employment permission. They have right to work, right to be protected, right to travel within United States yet at the same time they are of course obligated to accept the federal, state and local law. Refugees are also by law required to apply for the permanent residency permit , which is more commonly known as a green card. Refugees are automatically exempt from the 1,070 dollar fee to apply for the permanent residency. (Harris, 2016 pg. 49)

Other than the possibility to have employment permission, right to attend public school and right to travel within United States, they have had with just a refugee status; there are new rights which ownership of the green card brings. Permanent resident can own a property, apply for a driving license, receive social security, supplemental security income and Medicare benefits and leave and return to United States under certain conditions – which include not leaving the country for extended period of time. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services also recommends getting involved in a community, learn about American culture, history and government as being a permanent resident is also a first step on the way to citizenship (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2015, pg. 13-14, 16)

Refugee can apply for a citizenship after being a permanent resident for at least 5 years during which he or she didn't leave the country for trips of 6 months or longer. There are also more conditions to be able to naturalize. The applicant has to be of a good moral character, which means that one has to have a clean criminal record and cannot lie at the interview. Applicant must proof ordinary knowledge of English language in a three part test. The ability to speak English the applicant proves during a short interview with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration officer. During the reading part of the test, he or she has to read aloud at least one of three sentences correctly to pass and for the writing test, he or she needs to write at least one of three sentences which are dictated to him or her correctly. The other obligation is to prove knowledge of U.S. history and government in a civic test. There are 100 questions possible in areas of government, rights and responsibilities, American history and integrated civics category which include geography, symbols and holidays. To pass this test, applicant has to answer correctly six of ten questions asked. There are exceptions which allow some of the permanent residents not to take the test and still achieve the citizenship, usually due to age or disability (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2016, pg. 24-26, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, no date, no page).

Obtaining the citizenship is the highest goal for the full civic integration as it allows the person to fully participate in a social and political life. The citizen can vote and be elected, obtain citizenship to children born abroad, travel freely without time limitation with U.S. Passport, becoming eligible for a job in federal agencies.(U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2016, pg.3)

3. World Relief

One of my goals is to find out the role the organization plays in the National Refugee Resettlement Program and if it takes any extra efforts to support the successful integration over the recommended activities. Even though, I have chosen to describe this in just one affiliate of the organization, World Relief Spokane, I would, first of all, like to introduce the whole organization. I will start with its history, because I think the original incentive for its creation and its Christian roots influence its work until today, as it keeps its original direction of compassion with suffering people. I will follow with the organization's mission, vision and most importantly values as those stay the same for all the affiliates. Then I will finally move towards one certain location, Spokane as I will briefly introduce it. As the topic of this thesis is the refugee integration, I would like to describe organization's programs compatibility with the national integration policy.

3.1. History of World Relief Organization

The origins of World Relief fall all the way to 1940s' when the National Association of Evangelicals established back then called War Relief Commission (Mullin, 2014, pg. 41). The first time, it announced its mission of helping suffering Europeans after the World War II, was in 1944 (Mullin, 2014, pg. 47). They started to collect warm clothes and food, assuring givers that together with physical relief witness to Christ would be provided as they distributed the aid through local churches in Europe (United Evangelical Action, 1944 in Mullin, 2014, pg. 47, World Relief, 2016, no page)

In the 1950 National Association of Evangelicals Convention, agreed to expand with its mission beyond Europe, and the name was changed to World Relief Commission to reflect the expansion of the area of interest (Mullin, 2014, pg. 52-53). It initiated an aid program in Korea and started partnerships with evangelical churches worldwide (World Relief, 2016, no page). In 60' the humanitarian assistance had been provided in many countries after the natural catastrophes, such as aid for earthquake survivors in Chile or flood survivors in Korea. Furthermore it starts with now days called development

assistance including agricultural training and health programs (World Relief, 2016, no page).

For us is important the year 1979, when World Relief was for the first time authorized to resettle refugees (World Relief, 2016, no page). In years to come, World Relief continued to provide the humanitarian and development assistance worldwide as well as the resettlement assistance in the United States, while its resettlement offices number grew up to today's 25. As one of the nine agencies chosen by government to resettle Refugees, it every year assists to about 10 percent of all the refugees coming to United States (World Relief Spokane, 2016, no page). One of these 25 affiliates is the office in Spokane, Washington which the following section of this chapter are going to be about, but first it is necessary to mention vision, mission and values of this organization as it is what shapes not only the activities, but also the personnel behavior towards client and community.

3.2. Vision, mission and values

Being the Evangelical based organization; Christianity influences all their vision, mission the proclaimed values and action profoundly. World Relief envisions “the most vulnerable people transformed economically, socially, and spiritually in community with the local Church” and their mission is to “empower the local church to help the most vulnerable” (World Relief, 2016). On their web pages the organization also promotes its seven core values and as they claim: “At World Relief, our values drive all we do”.

The first of them is the following the example of Jesus Christ. Doing so, they promise serving the poor ones and those who suffer from injustice and doing it regardless of clients' color, faith, or gender. They yet state that “[they] seek to follow Jesus by living holy, humble, and honest lives individually and corporately” (World Relief, 2016, no page).

The second and third values listed are the local church and people. According to World Relief, church as well as all people involved should be “agents of peace, justice and love” not only by words but also by action. They promise to seek understanding and respect

as they are multicultural commonalty. Important aspect is also acknowledgement of being changed by those who they serve.

The fourth of core values is the Continuous Improvement as they try to provide all the services the most effective, efficient and most importantly, sustainable manner which is the best for community's spiritual, social and economic life. With this are closely connected the fifth and sixth one – Empowerment through participation of those who they serve, either people individually, communities or even churches and institutions; and partnership with all the stakeholders, such as governments, churches, other non-profit organizations, businesses etc. to serve the vulnerable the best possible way. The last value mentioned is a prayer which serves as a foundation for the success.

3.3. World Relief Spokane

The resource for this chapter is mainly the web page of World Relief Spokane. To describe the activities a little closer, I am using my experience from three month internship there. World Relief Spokane was established in 1992 as a sub-office of affiliate in Connell, Washington and in 1997 became an Affiliate office itself. As per today, the World Relief office is the only organization to resettle refugees in Spokane and annually it welcomes anywhere between 400 to 600 refugees. It assists refugees in several areas of the life through different timely overlapping programs. A lot of its work is based on over 100 volunteers and partnership with local schools, churches and other non-governmental organizations.

3.3.1 Reception and Placement Program

According to a Resettlement and Placement program within the U.S. Department of State, there are several responsibilities for the resettling organization. According to the agreement they are required to meet the refugees at the airport and take them to their apartment which should be already furnished and equipped with appliances. Refugee

should also receive clothing appropriate for the climate condition and some food they are familiar with. Soon after the arrival, the resettlement organization is required to assist with refugees' new start in United States. This includes assistance with Social Security card application, registration to school for children and arranging medical appointments. They are also connecting them with social and language services and showing where they can access shopping facilities.

In World Relief Spokane, every refugee receives assistance through their reception and placement program which is co-financed by one time grant for each refugee from the Resettlement and Placement program of the Department of state. In accordance with the Department of State agreement, they welcome the refugee at the airport and provide them with the familiar meal. This meal is often cooked by former refugees from the same nation who have been already resettled in Spokane or by volunteers.

In reality, refugees are not taken directly to an apartment meant for them, since it can take up to three days before all the formalities necessary regarding the lease for the apartment are accomplished. During this time, the refugee usually stays in a hotel or a volunteer host family, which is the preferred option, not only regarding the financial aspect, but as they claim, "A host family can help make their [refugees'] reception in Spokane a warm and fond memory by opening their home to these newcomers". After this short period refugees are taken to their apartment.

For the first three months, they are provided with basic necessities such as basic furnishing, kitchen utensils, bedding, cleaning supplies and hygiene products. During this period the staff and volunteers provide them with the cultural orientation, which includes everything from proper handshake to the basic hygiene routine. As this cultural orientation includes some sensitive topics, it is helpful that many of World Relief's employees are former refugees who can explain it appropriately. Further, they assist them to apply for the necessary documents, such as Social Security Card and help them enroll into a public welfare services available to those with low income such as Medicaid or food stamps. They assist with enrollment to public schools, English classes and Employment services. When necessary, they accompany the clients to their medical appointments.

Furthermore, the staff organizes refugee simulations for public which allow people to peek into the refugees' experience and let them understand a little more about the resettlement process. It is paid and the money collected is used for refugee services.

3.3.2. Employment programs

As stated in chapter 2, employment is one of the core conditions for integration in United States. To support early employment, Department of Social and Health Services and its Office for Refugee Resettlement provide funds through different programs which differ mostly by eligibility of client due to a family status, motivation to work and knowledge. World Relief Spokane participates in four of these programs, Basic Food and Training Program, Limited English Proficiency Program, Refugees with Special Employment needs Program, and Match Grant Program. Furthermore, it also assists with micro-enterprise development.

Basic Food and Training Program is meant for clients who are Basic Food subsidy recipients and who at the same time do not participate in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families WorkFirst program. The advantage of this program is that it is not limited by time of residence in United States. Limited English Proficiency program is meant for refugees who receive the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits. Refugees with Special Employment needs Program targets and refugees with very low English knowledge. For this program is typical emphasize on the strong case management, job placement and retention (Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, no date, no page).

Match Grant Program is different in compare to the previously mentioned. It is limited to 120 respectively 180 days (Office of Refugee Resettlement, no date, no page) and it serves as an alternative to welfare, while the other programs are just supplemental to it. From the financial point of view, it requires resettlement agency involvement as the rule is that for every dollar raised by the organization, the Office of Refugee Resettlement provides another two, up to 2,200 dollars per client (World Relief Spokane, no date, no page, Office for Refugee Resettlement, no date no page). This program is highly successful as it is targeted to serve the most motivated refugees. Usually are enrolled those who either already know English or are physically fit. As per World Relief Spokane, their success rate

is 97%. This number does not necessary mean all these refugees obtained a work reflecting their education and abilities. From my experience while I was an intern, most of clients were beginning at the entry level positions. But as statistics are not available I am not able to make a final statement.

The services provided thought these programs do not vary profoundly as the goal of all is the same, to assist the client to find employment and become self-sufficient as soon as possible. Activities done with clients are English lessons, both the basic English as well as employment specific English for clients who do not speak, personal development for future job including job skills lessons, resume building, job interview preparation, and certain level of case management, important is also job search with client. The difference between programs is usually the frequency of these activities, for example the English lessons. As the World Relief Spokane closely cooperates with Spokane Community College, the more intensive, English as a second language, trainings are provided there. There is also large net of volunteers and interns who assist in teaching, sometimes visiting clients at home, and sometimes providing lessons in office. World Relief Spokane employs Job Developers whose goal is to build relationships with the employers while matching refugees with the proper jobs. They also assist clients with job applications and interview process.

The other possible option for refugees on a path to self-sufficiency is opening their own business. For this reason World Relief Spokane offers also the Micro-Enterprise Development Program on which it closely cooperates with Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners, which is private human-services agency working with clients with low incomes. It is also one of the 18 grantees of Microenterprise Development program of Office of Refugee Resettlement. Within this program clients can enroll into workshops regarding the business plan creation, tax preparation, management and application for a small business loan. Through funding from Office of Refugee Resettlement, clients can obtain a micro-loan up to 15,000 dollars and for some also a revolving loan fund is available (Office of Refugee Resettlement (b), no date). Yerebakan and Franson, the two people responsible for this program at the time, in their interview for a Journal of Business (2013, B1,B8) stated that in a period since 2007 until 2012 the program provided 109 loans which led to creation of 314 jobs.

3.3.3. Legal services and Citizenship Education

World Relief Spokane offers also legal services for the refugees and immigrants. It assists with citizenship applications, permanent residency permit applications and their renewals and replacements. It helps with family petitions, which are needed in cases when client is trying to bring to United States relatives who stayed abroad. Additionally they advise and assist with other cases regarding legal and immigration topics, which can be very unique as will be visible from the case study in following chapter.

The citizenship classes the organization provides free of charge. Clients obtain lessons regarding history of United States and civics. It also prepares them for an interview with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service officer which is a part of a language examination.

3.3.4. Anti-Human Trafficking

The organization doesn't assist only refugees. Another target group is the victims of human trafficking. World Relief is a member of Faith Alliance against Slavery and Trafficking. It plays educational role as it teaches about the issue within the community. It increases awareness within the Spokane population by campaigning. It also provides case management for the foreign born victims within the Washington state.

3.3.5. Financing

As could be seen above, the resources needed for the activities come from private, federal and state funds. Major donors are a Department of State, Department of Health and Human Services and Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. Organization collects the resources through various fundraising activities such as concerts or running competitions, which at the same time function as awareness raisers. Large support for activities comes from seven local churches which partner with World Relief

Spokane as their members do not only provide the material support but most importantly volunteer hours as well as they spreads the knowledge about the World Relief actions within the community. The organization has several ways how individual or organization can contribute by either financial or material donation or volunteer hours.

As concrete numbers for World Relief Spokane are not available, here I present, just for illustration, the World Relief's corporation numbers for 2014. The organization as a whole resettled 9,920 refugees. The services were provided to 16,600 refugees and the total cost of these services was 30,747,070 dollars. From this number, grants were 11,922,926 dollars (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, 2014, pg. 2).

3.3.6. Fulfilling the national policy and organization's goals

Above I described the programs and activities World Relief has, to contribute in fulfilling the national resettlement and integration policy. It follows the goal of early employment for self-sufficiency. The data for most of the employment programs successfulness are not available, other than the Match Grant Program, where the successfulness reaches to 97 percent.

Within all the programs English language courses are integrated. There are no data available about how long it takes for Refugees to learn the language and if the refugees are actually able to master the language. Nevertheless, the lessons are frequent and intensive for all the clients who come without the knowledge.

Regarding the civic integration as specified in previous chapters, the World Relief Spokane provides clients with assistance regarding permanent residency and citizenship. As per Mark Kadel, the director of this affiliate, in the statement for Journal of Business (2013), 80 percent of refugees who resettle in Spokane become citizens.

One more thing I would like to address here is the other integration pillar World Relief adds to the official integration policy list and that is the integration into community. Not only it provides the "warm welcome" at the airport, but it continues with volunteer neighbor group follow up work the way, so the client doesn't feel abandoned, it also creates a groups a female volunteers for refugee single mothers support.

The effort to fulfill its mission, results in large church community involvement which trickles to the rest of society. Other than with the churches, the organization is also trying to build good relationships with local employers, schools other non-governmental organizations and public as whole through the educative activities as a refugee simulation or race to end slavery running competition and communication through media.

4. Case Study

In this chapter I would like to present a case study of one of the World Relief's client in 2013. Through this case study, I will tackle the third goal of my thesis, which is to find out if the organization takes any extra efforts to support successful integration. I will open this chapter by methodology I used, following it with the case interpretation. At the end of this chapter I will provide a discussion on the achievement of my goal.

4.1. Methodology

As described in literature, case study "is a detailed study of one person, when we focus on different aspects of his or her life and we try to make a complete picture of this case in the widest possible context" (Hendl, 1999 in Miovisky 2006, pg. 95). For the study, I have followed the phases as described by Miovisky (2006, pg. 98): Research question, Definition of the case, strategy for the case choice, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, interpretation criteria, reflection, and final report.

Research Question: How do the activities of World Relief Spokane support the refugee integration?

Case Definition: It will research the level of integration of this client and the role the activities of this organization played in it

Strategy for a Case Choice: I have chosen this client regarding several criteria. First of them was my ability to communicate with the client as many refugees coming to Spokane don't speak English or Spanish. Following criteria was the client's willingness to

share her story with me. As I was an intern in this organization at the time, I have chosen a client I was to work with which would allow me to see a progress within the time

Methods of Data Collection: I have conducted 12 short semi-structured interviews with the client over the 2 month period. As in the organizations office was not possible to record these interviews as well as the conversations were not only regarding this research but mostly were part of activities I was doing with the client as an intern, I was writing down the notes on paper. I was also writing down the dates when these conversations took place.

Methods of Data Analysis: I divided the notes into thematic groups and placed them on a time line as the conversations were done during a two month period. The thematic groups were selected regarding the areas in which the organization interacted with the client at the time – language, employment and community participation. During the interview another important topic was identified and that was the legal issue.

Interpretation criteria: There can be certain limits found in this research. The most important one is me not being an independent researcher, but an intern within the organization. This could lead primarily to client not telling me fully her perception of the activities, and about the concerns and criticism she might possibly have regarding them as I could have been perceived as an organization’s representative for her. Other possible limit was my ability to speak Spanish as the conversations were held in Spanish because client is a native speaker and she did not speak English.

Reflection: To alleviate the above mentioned limitations, in case I was not hundred percent sure I understood properly, I was asking for further explanation. I was also consulting with her case worker who worked with the client since the arrival to United States. It is difficult to alleviate completely the limitation of me being one of the people actually working with the client, but I have tried to do so by warm and friendly approach to her.

Final report: I will describe the client’s case and interpret the information received within the frame of integration pillars set in previous chapters. Employment, Language acquisition, civic integration and community integration

4.2. Case interpretation

For my case interpretation I have chosen Mrs. Juana. The first time I have met her and her husband it was in one of the hotels in Spokane where another intern and I were supposed to assist them with job application filling. They both seemed to be shy and quiet and at first I did not even consider asking for interviews. But, as at the time, there were not enough volunteers who would speak Spanish I started to meet with them more often and as we got to know each other better they became more open to me and even after my return we kept some level of e-mail correspondence.

4.2.1. Case description

Juana is originally from Cuba where she worked as a hairdresser. She did not want to talk much about the life in Cuba, but often she was mentioning that her parents stayed there. At the arrival, she was in her late 30'. She arrived to United States together with her husband and ten years old daughter. At the arrival they were matched with a former Cuban refugee who was then already a permanent resident and was living in Spokane. This person was translating for the family as well as assisting them with a job search. They were enrolled in the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program. This provided them with intensive English courses at Spokane Community College, as well as, work specific vocabulary training and job application assistance from Word Relief. But as Juana was saying, she had difficulties to concentrate in classes, because of the immigration issues of her 17 years old son. He was also granted the refugee status and was supposed to arrive together with his parents, but due to certain administrative issues on Cuban side, he was not allowed to leave the country which Juana considered to be a state revenge. As she said, it was very difficult decision to fly away and leave the son there, even when he had grandparents to stay with, but because they had already received the loan for the airplane tickets they did not have much option.

This profoundly affected the family's situation while in United States as they were putting a large effort to resolve this issue which took away from their time to establish themselves there. Primarily she and her husband were trying to solve it through World Relief's legal department. After the Cuban government rejected a signed petition with an affidavit, there was not much more that World Relief's legal department could do. The only option that the Cuban government had given them was to go to the Cuban Embassy in Washington DC. World relief was unable to get airplane tickets for them, but fortunately the man who was matched with them at the arrival and who became their friend by then lent them the money for the flight. World Relief was able to provide accommodation for them upon their arrival to Washington DC. They were able to resolve the issue at the embassy, and their son was allowed to leave Cuba for the United States a few months later.

As mentioned above Juana had, by her own words, problems to concentrate due to this issue on her lessons. But after resolving it even their motivation and concentration grew higher. Even though her language abilities didn't expand profoundly, soon she found a job as a maid in local Hotel. Also her husband was able to gain employment at a local sushi restaurant. As she said, they wanted to work hard because they wanted to return the money lent for ticket soon so their friend is not short of it.

Few months later Juana and her family moved from Spokane to Florida. According to her it was because there she would not have to speak English and it is warmer there.

4.2.2. Interpretation in Categories

As the organization takes a responsibility for refugee's resettlement its actions are reflecting in almost all aspect of client's life. Regarding to the previous chapters (see 1.3. and), the categories are Employment, Language Acquisition, Civic Integration and I have added also the community integration as it crystalized to be another integration pillar the organization build on (see 3.3.6.)

Employment: Almost immediately after client's arrival the organization enrolled her into employment program specialized for the refugees with very low or no English. In the organization she had her case worker who was scheduling her for trainings. There were group workshops in the organization within the cultural orientation regarding work ethic in United States or the interviews. Once or twice a week she was also scheduled with intern who assisted her with job applications. For the first time she was also accompanied by volunteer to turn the job application in. At the end she found an employment via a friend who recommended her for the position, yet the application for this position was filled with the assistance of one of the volunteers. Back in Cuba she used to be a hairdresser, but due to lack of English knowledge, the case worker did not recommend to apply for similar customer facing positions.

Language Acquisition: Right after the arrival the organization enrolled her into intensive English as a Second Language course conducted by Spokane Community College. Over this course, she also attended lessons in World Relief Office led by either intern or volunteer. In these lessons she was taught the vocabulary specific for the work positions she was applying to, which for Juana were usually maid positions. Even though she attended both the courses in the Spokane Community College and the lectures led by volunteer, her English didn't improve which was due to significant stress which impede her to concentrate.

Civic Integration: The interviews were conducted at the time, when client did not yet have the option to apply for either permanent residency or citizenship, for this reason client didn't participated in any of the activities provided in this area. Nevertheless, the possibility to benefit from these activities was open for future.

Community Integration: At arrival she and her family were matched with a former Cuban refugee, which showed up to be a very good move as it help Juana profoundly though the difficult period when she was not sure if her son would be able to come. They have become friends and though him she and her family got to meet the other Spanish speakers in the area. This way the family was able to participate in a community of Spanish speakers as they started to visit each other on regular basis. Several times Juana also took care of other women's children and also opposite way; some of the families took care of her

daughter in cases as when she and her husband had to leave for Washington D.C. or simply just for job interviews

4.2.3 Discussion

After some time I have spent with Juana she agreed I could use her for my case study. Since I was an intern in the organization and was meeting with Juana on weekly basis, I have decided not to conduct one long interview, but rather every time we had met to have a short conversation. Furthermore it allowed me to see the progress in the categories I have set for the research. As the interviews were usually done in the World Relief office during work hours, it was impossible to use Dictaphone to record them, on the other side, not having the recording device let to more friendly like conversation which very often ran away from the topic I originally wanted to talk about, such as how she perceives the linguistic education. Instead, she opened different topics which enriched my knowledge but also the outcomes of my case study.

In the beginning I was a little afraid my limited knowledge of Spanish will prevent me from obtaining the necessary information from Juana, but with help of Juana's patience it turned out better than expected. Some information about her case I was also able to obtain from her case worker as we discussed what should be done and from the legal department when I was translating Juana's request regarding the issue of her son's immigration.

For Juana is very important family and she felt extremely distressed by not having her son with them. She told me, he had never been without them for longer than a week. Similarly she was also missing her parents. On the other side, she said she experienced warm acceptance from the other Spanish speaking refugees which made her feel better.

The organization affected Juana in basically all the integration aspects. It matched her and her family with the Cubans already integrated in Spokane society; it provided her with English lessons as well as employment preparation. It also assisted with the administrative issues regarding applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families,

social security cards, the application for electricity and gas subsidy etc. But to be fully able to get the most from all these activities and assistance, she would have to be in better mind condition. Due to her family issues she was not able to fully concentrate and take the best out of activities offered to her, which she was realizing and regretting.

Overall, it took almost three months to have the immigration issue solved which led to rather late start for Juana to fully participate in activities offered. After she and her husband returned from Washington D.C. from the Cuban embassy, their attitude had changed completely. They became more active in a job search as they were motivated by the debt they had with a friend who lent them money for airplane tickets. It was also visible that they started to commit more effort into English learning even though when I was talking to Juana the last time she still was not able to communicate.

The role of organization could have been more significant in the aspects of employment and language acquisition in case she would not have her mind occupied by the unresolved immigration issue of her son. But even with this limitation, the organization was able to provide her with some training of skills such as job search and job interview training together with the vocabulary training in area of hotel services before she started with her work there. From the position of the official national integration policy we could claim the integration was a success in the area of employment, even though it was not fully thanks to the organization's effort. In the other two elements, language acquisition and civic integration the goal was not fulfilled at the time when my research ended.

The most successful part of integration seems at the end the integration into a community. Even if it did not take the path through the church as the organization usually promotes, by pairing Juana and her family with other Cuban who also had the experience of being refugee and who introduced them to the wider Spanish speaking community, helped Juana to receive emotional support as well.

Conclusion

The United States has a long tradition of accepting people fleeing their countries. It is possible to say that by today's measures many of the first arrivals to United States from the very beginning of the state could be considered refugees, however, not until the end of World War II was there established any legal frame for their admission and integration. After the war, there were several laws passed regarding refugees, but all these laws were just temporary as they were reaction to one particular crisis at the time, such as large displacement of Europeans after the World War II or Vietnam War. The permanent legislation did not come in action until the passage of Refuge Act of 1980 which is valid until today. This law is important because it contains the definition of refugee complying with the 1967 United Nations Protocol; it sets the procedure for the refugee admission and also establishes the partnership with non-governmental organizations for the purpose of resettlement and integration of arrivals.

There are several procedural steps before refugee can even enter the United States. He or she needs to be first of all referred for resettlement by either United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee, U.S. Embassy or by non-governmental organization. Once this is done, they go through various screening procedures to make sure they do not propose any future danger for the United States. Before they enter they also pass a cultural orientation lessons which should ease their adjustment to a life in a new country.

Refugees make up for relatively small proportion of immigrants, but still they are very diverse group. In past years the number of nationalities of refugees resettled in the United States grew to over 60. With this, the number of languages spoken increased. Furthermore, there are large differences in education level, English knowledge and even literacy. All this poses challenge for the resettlement agencies performance in assistance to refugees with their integration.

Integration, which is the main topic of my thesis, is an important cooperation of non-governmental sector and federal agencies. Federal agencies have several programs which should facilitate the integration of refugees. Through these programs they provide funds to contracted non-governmental resettlement organizations. The main areas or

integration I have identified in the federal policy are employment, language skills and civic integration.

I did not find much of criticism regarding the integration policy in aspect of English acquisition and civic integration, on the other hand, there is a profound discussion about the employment pillar as the law is interpreted the way that refugee is supposed to get to employment as soon as possible to become self-sufficient. Critics of this approach claim that being in job which is inappropriate to one's education and knowledge, mostly low profile job, is not a proper method for integration. This approach can also hurt the ones with low skills, because instead of improving their abilities through a proper training, they might get locked in low profile jobs barely fulfilling their needs.

In the empirical part of my thesis I have tried to answer what role one certain organization, World Relief, plays in the National Refugee Resettlement Program and if it takes any extra efforts to support the successful integration over the recommended activities. I found that its role is quite important as about 10 percent of refugees are resettled via its affiliates. Through its programs and activities connected to funds from federal agencies it provides clients with the services regarding the employment, linguistic and civic pillars of integration. Furthermore, it emphasizes strongly the need of integration within community. For this reason I have added the community integration to the list of the integration pillars which I then used case study interpretation categories.

The research was conducted in on of World Relief's affiliates, specifically the one in Spokane, Washington. The goal of this research was to find out how the activities of World Relief, Spokane support the refugee integration. I have chosen a Cuban refugee and conducted with her several short interviews during a two month period. Information collected through these interviews and conversation with client's case worker I have divided into thematic groups. The categories I used for interpretation were the pillars of integration specified in foregoing chapters; these were employment, language acquisition, civic integration and community integration.

The result of the study is that activities of World Relief Spokane do support client's integration but full use of these activities from the side of a client can be profoundly affected by a mental status of the client at the time. The best outcome was in a category of

community integration which was triggered by the organization matching the client with a former refugee who was also originally from Cuba and who became the means by which the clients connected with a broader Spanish speaking group. After the initial step of the organization there was no need for more activity from the organization's side as network of people who the client closely interacted grew spontaneously. This also affected the result in employment category when the client was able to obtain a job position due to recommendation from a friend. In this category organization supported client with a job application filling assistance, interview training or job specific vocabulary lessons which client later actually used on a worksite.

The most problematic issue was within the language acquisition category. Even though the organization provided the clients with intensive language lessons, the improvement was for a long time barely noticeable. As for my case study, it could have been for her inability to concentrate as she was stressed out about her son's immigration issue.

The category of civic integration stayed open for later time. As at the time I was interviewing the client, she was not yet eligible for either permanent residency or citizenship and for this reason she didn't participate in any activities regarding it. It is probable that she would participate in these activities later, as she, as all other refugees, are required to apply for permanent residency after one year in the United States.

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